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EDUCATION AND THE UNIVERSITY

(III) LITERARY STUDIES

A CORRESPONDENT among those I quoted in the last number of *Scrutiny* remarked on the inconspicuousness in my *Sketch for an English School* of the avowed central interest, literature, and suggested that I should write further and explain my provisions for making the other-than-literary work justify itself—demonstrate its pertinence—in improved performance in the literary-critical field:

> ' As it stands, the superficial censor might say that the article seems to show more concern for history.'

I replied by disowning what this correspondent assumed to be my intention: the point of the scheme was, I said, not that all this work should be focussed on the production of the complete literary critic, but that they should be qualified literary critics who did such work —that it should be undertaken by minds informed, sensitized and equipped in a thorough literary training. What might, perhaps, fairly be demanded of me was some account of my Part I, which was to provide for competence in literature.

I am not, however, now proposing to write a formal ' sketch ' that shall pair with the earlier one. For that ' sketch,' it will be recalled, was offered merely as a compromise solution. The experimenters, it was assumed, would be given for experiment only their Part II. The student's earlier course would be outside their province, though they were to count on his coming to them well-qualified already in literature. Nevertheless, though it is unnecessary, and not in the plan, to sketch as corollary to the revolutionized Part II an equally revolutionized Part I, there are things to be said about necessary changes in current practice; changes that would make possible a better use of the time, in any case limited, that can be allowed for work in literature.

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The problem of getting done, in any allowance of time that can be thought of as assignable to it, the work necessary if the qualifications specified are to be really acquired will no doubt be insisted on by critics of the scheme. The student is to come to Part II bringing with him a good knowledge of English literature from Chaucer, trained perception and judgment and a skilled habit of critical analysis and critical expression—a tall order, it will be said. Among those who say it most sceptically will certainly be some who haven't the good fortune to know with how good a start, even as things are, students can come up from school. And there is no conclusive reason why students in general who intend to read English should not come up with as good a start. But of course, no general improvement can be expected in the schools until there has been an improvement at the university. We are back at the question: in what ways could time and energy be better spent there?

It must be said bluntly that as things are, even where enlightenment most prevails and literature is emancipated from linguistic, a bad economy is positively prescribed, and the student wastes his labour not only through lack of guidance, but in compliance with authoritative misdirection. Are the principles that should govern a School of English so hard to grasp? Here, to begin with, is a negative formulation: there is no more futile study than that which ends with mere knowledge *about* literature. If literature is worth study, then the test of its having been so will be the ability to read literature intelligently, and apart from this ability an accumulation of knowledge is so much lumber. The study of a literary text about which the student cannot say, or isn't concerned to be able to say, as a matter of first-hand perception and judgment—of intelligent realization—why it should be worth study is a self-stultifying occupation.

Even as a specialist business literary scholarship is apt to defeat even its own limited purpose through having neglected to provide itself with a minimum gleam of critical intelligence; and the English 'Honours' man who, dealing with Shakespeare, cannot show more competence as a reader of English poetry than is commonly evidenced by footnotes in (say) his *Arden* edition has certainly defeated the true purpose of the School responsible for his training. Literary history, as a matter of 'facts about' and accepted critical (or quasi-critical) description and commentary, is

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a worthless acquisition; worthless for the student who cannot as a critic—that is, as an intelligent and discerning reader—make a personal approach to the essential data of the literary historian, the works of literature (an approach is personal or it is nothing: you cannot take over the appreciation of a poem, and unappreciated, the poem isn't ' there '). The only acquisition of literary history having any educational value is that made in the exercise of critical intelligence to the ends of the literary critic. Does this need arguing? Yet I have know the ' outlines of literary history ' proposed as part of a test that, taken early in the ' Honours ' course, should determine whether or not the student should be allowed to proceed—proposed, that is, as a subject of preparatory study.

It is plain that in the work of a properly ordered English School (and here we have the positive corollary of the negative proposition thrown out above) the training of reading capacity has first place. By training of reading capacity I mean the training of perception, judgment and analytic skill commonly indicated as ' practical criticism.' Sureness of judgment, of course, implies width of experience, and there is an unending problem of adjusting, in the student's work, the relations of intensive to extensive. Nevertheless, ' practical criticism ' has a certain obvious priority; otherwise the acquisition of experience will be (as it so often is) an illusory matter. With the gain in experience will go more advanced and extended applications of critical method that develop out of the limited initial work—more difficult and sustained exercises in the essential discipline.

Practical criticism, training of perception and judgment, analysis—what are these, or what can they be, to justify this stress laid on them, the key-function here assigned them, as discipline? That the question will be asked by some of those to whom my ' sketch ' must be thought of as being addressed has now to be recognized, though there is no way of giving a convincing answer here to the most sceptical kind of asker. The only conceivably effective answer would be some fairly prolonged exemplification of relevant work as it would be carried on in routine practice. It is obviously impossible to produce in this note the substance of a manual of analytic method—and the book to send the reader to doesn't exist. That the problem of demonstration should arise as such brings home how little, in the way of performance of their

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function, is commonly expected, or to be expected, either of literary critics or of English Schools.

For surely, as one might say to one's beginning students, it should be possible, by cultivating attentive reading, to acquire a higher skill than the untrained reader has: a skill that will enable the trained reader to do more with a poem than ejaculate approval or disapproval, or dismiss it with vaguely reported general impressions, qualified with the modest recognition that (in Arnold Bennett's words) 'taste after all is relative.' Analysis, one would go on, is the process by which we seek to attain a complete reading of the poem—a reading that approaches as nearly as possible to the perfect reading. There is about it nothing in the nature of 'murdering to dissect,' and suggestions that it can be anything in the nature of laboratory-method misrepresent it entirely. We can have the poem only by an inner kind of possession; it is ' there ' for analysis only in so far as we are responding appropriately to the words on the page. In pointing to them (and there is nothing else to point to) what we are doing is to bring into sharp focus, in turn, this, that and the other detail, juncture or relation in our total response; or (since ' sharp focus ' may be a misleading account of the kind of attention sometimes required), what we are doing is to dwell with a deliberate, considering responsiveness on this, that or the other node or focal point in the complete organization that the poem is, in so far as we have it. Analysis is not a dissection of something that is already and passively there. What we call analysis is, of course, a constructive or creative process. It is a more deliberate following-through of that process of creation in response to the poet's words which reading is. It is a re-creation in which, by a considering attentiveness, we ensure a more than ordinary faithfulness and completeness.

As addressed to other readers it is an appeal for corroboration: ' the poem builds up in this way, doesn't it? this bears such-and-such a relation to that, don't you agree? ' In the work of an English School this aspect of mutual check—positively, of collaboration ' in the common pursuit of true judgment '—would assert itself as a matter of course.

To insist on this critical work as discipline is not to contemplate the elaboration of technical apparatus and drill. The training is to be one in the sensitive and scrupulous use of intelligence; to that end,

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such help as can be given the student will not be in the nature of initiations into technical procedures, and there is no apparatus to be handed over—a show of such in analytic work will most likely turn out to be a substitute for the use of intelligence upon the text. Where help can and should be got, of course, is in examples of good practice, wherever these can be found. ' Instruction ' will take the form of varied and developing demonstration, offered to the actively critical student (*i.e.* in discussion-work conditions) as exemplifying a suitable use of intelligence.

And it is not only good examples that have an educational function. A useful exercise for the moderately seasoned student would be to go through *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, or parts of it, discriminating between the profitable and the unprofitable, the valid and the vicious. Empson's extremely mixed and uneven book, offering as it does a good deal of valuable stimulus, serves the better as a warning—a warning against temptations that the analyst whose practice is to be a discipline must resist. It abounds in instances of ingenuity that has taken the bit between its teeth. Valid analytic practice is a strengthening of the sense of relevance: scrutiny of the parts must be at the same time an effort towards fuller realization of the whole, and all appropriate play of intelligence, being also an exercise of the sense of value, is controlled by an implicit concern for a total value-judgment.

Another mixed provision of the stimulating and the aberrant that the student will inevitably come across and could with profit be helped to make some critical use of is the work of I. A. Richards. Here, of course, will be found the ambition to make analysis a laboratory technique, and the student going through *Practical Criticism* will note that nevertheless—or consequently—the show of actual analysis in that book is little more than show. The later ' semasiological ' work, with its insistent campaign against the ' Proper (or One Right) Meaning Superstition ' and its lack of any disciplinary counter-concern has tended, in so far as it has had influence, to encourage the Empsonian kind of irresponsibility. Inadequate and naïve ideas about the workings of language do without doubt prevail in the academic world and outside, and can profitably receive attention, but there will hardly have been profit on the balance if the literary student, as a result, tends to forget the one right total meaning that should commonly

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control his analysis.

If the dubious reader has by now some notion of what at any rate the literary critical discipline is not, that is something gained. To go very far in a positive account is not possible here, and by some readers (by most, perhaps, of those I shall actually have) will not be thought necessary. It will be gathered that demonstration and guidance even at the outset will take as little as possible the form, ' this is the correct method.' In the early stages, of course, there must be some pretty positive initiation. This would be done in terms of type-cases so elementary and obvious that the use they are put to could hardly be questioned by anyone of literary experience. Since so much stress has been laid on the ' discipline,' and since the assumption is that I am not addressing merely those who do not need convincing, I had better commit myself in a certain amount of detailed illustration. What follows is a compressed summary, such as might appear in a manual of critical analysis, of what might be done in discussion in a practical criticism group.[1]

One would take for a start a familiar piece, the nature and quality of which are immediately obvious—Arnold's sonnet *To Shakespeare* will do very well:

> Others abide our question. Thou art free.
> We ask and ask: Thou smilest and art still,
> Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill
> That to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
> Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
> Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
> Spares but the cloudy border of his base
> To the foil'd searching of mortality;
> And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
> Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure,
> Didst walk on earth unguess'd at. Better so!
> All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
> All weakness that impairs, all griefs that bow,
> Find their sole voice in that victorious brow.

That (one might preface) would not in the ordinary way challenge

[1]It comes, as a matter of fact, from a book on analysis and appreciation not yet published.

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critical attention. It is the kind of thing that we recognize at a glance, place, and pass by, without stopping to analyse and examine —there is no need. Faced, there being no text to hand, with describing it for someone who chanced not to recollect it we might very well say (this description would probably emerge from the group), 'It's a sonnet in the Grand Style, in the Wordsworth-Milton manner.' And in saying this (one might go on to suggest) we should, for a moderately intelligent and experienced person, be conveying a strong presumption (which might just possibly be wrong) as to value—a strong presumption that nothing more need be said. It would be gathered that the sonnet is, in the pejorative sense, literary —a piece of mere versifying; a product of good taste at the best, and nothing more.

I am assuming now a general agreement about it to this effect. But the problem would be to work out how one might set about enforcing such a judgment if someone should question it. Matthew Arnold, after all, is a poet of repute and the sonnet may be found in the standard anthologies.

In criticism, of course (one would emphasize), nothing can be proved; there can, in the nature of the case, be no laboratory-demonstration or anything like it. Nevertheless, it is nearly always possible to go further than merely asserting a judgment or inviting agreement with a general account. Commonly one can call attention to this, that or the other detail by way of making the nature and force of one's judgment plain. And in a case as simple as the present one can very often, putting a finger on something in the text, make an observation that is irresistible and final.

In Matthew Arnold's sonnet (it would be concluded in discussion) such a place is clearly the fifth line:

Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea . . .

The trope of a hill's 'planting its feet' in the sea would have passed: it is sanctioned currency, and in suggestion (such as it has) it is static. But 'footsteps' (arrived at through 'apt alliteration') introduces a ludicrous suggestion of gigantic, ponderously wading strides. Or rather, it would do so if the line were anything but a matter of words of no very particular effect. For clearly, it could only have been offered by an unrealizing mind, handling words from the outside. And if we ask how it is that any

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reader (as clearly many have done) lets it pass, the answer is that the sonnet imposes the kind of attention, or inattention, that it needs. It imposes an unrealizing attention, if ' attention ' is the word. The reader (the right one) yields himself deferentially, and responds with unction, to the familiar signals:

> Others abide our question. Thou art free.
> We ask and ask. Thou smilest and art still,
> Out-topping knowledge

After that opening the critically-inert reader recognizes happily what he is being offered, and no one else has much hope. And, as a matter of fact, the whole sonnet turns out to be an orotund exercise in thuriferous phrases and generalities, without one touch of particularity or distinction. Arnold is not using a conventional Grand Style for the expression of a personally felt theme; he is using it, in the absence of anything to say, as a substitute; the vague prestige-value inhering in the phrases because of the work of other poets has to serve instead of meaning. Whatever he may suppose, he has nothing worth calling a theme. Had he realized in the least what purports to be his theme, Shakespeare's greatness or inscrutability, a mountain could never have presented itself to him as a symbol for it. There is nothing remote or austerely and inhumanly exalted about Shakespeare, whose genius is awe-inspiring by the inwardness and completeness of its humanity: it commands us from within. But to a versifier in the Romantic tradition (and a Wordsworthian) at that date, genuflecting poetically before a vague idea of poetic genius, the mountain would come inevitably—its massiveness a vague compensation, as it were, for the vagueness of the idea. So little is Arnold really concerned with Shakespeare (or anything in particular) that he can give us as one line of fourteen:

> And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know . . .

It would not be impressive, even if less irrelevant, addressed to Wordsworth; addressed to Shakespeare it is an unwitting confession of vacuity.

There is no need to examine the sonnet further here. One could make finally plain just how one intended to place it by saying that there are at any time at least half-a-dozen poets at Oxford

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or Cambridge who could write a poem as good. The reason for considering it at all was that it offers an obvious and very simple illustration of a point in critical method. Putting a finger on the ' steadfast footsteps ' of the fifth line, one can show that what betrays itself indefensibly there is a general debility that is manifested throughout the sonnet in the dead conventionality of the phrasing—in the lack of any vital organization among the words. The unfortunate trope is the local index of a radical absence of grasp: the poet can only have committed it because he had nothing in particular that he was intent on realizing. Throwing out a practical tip for the analyst, one might add that general deficiency in the whole tends to betray itself locally in this way, and that, in verifying and enforcing a judgment, it is the metaphors and the imagery in especial that one should scrutinise for producible evidence.

Having said this, however, one draws back from making the tip more explicit. It is easy to point out that Matthew Arnold's metaphor is completely and betrayingly unrealized. But it will not do to say simply that in good poetry the metaphors are realized. In fact, there are hardly any rules that can, with any profit, be laid down: the best critical terms and concepts one can find or provide oneself with will be inadequate to the varied complexities with which the critic has to deal. Take, for instance, the idea of ' realization ' that was introduced with ' realized ' and ' unrealized ' —terms that will be used again, for they are indispensable. Any suggestion that these terms introduce a simple or easily applied criterion may be countered with the following passage:

> All our service,
> In every point twice done, and then done double,
> Were poor and single business to contend
> Against those honours deep and broad wherewith
> Your majesty loads our house
>
> [*Macbeth*, I, vi.]

This is an ordinary piece of mature Shakespeare. That is, without exemplifying the more remarkable Shakespearean complexity, it has the life and body which are the pervasive manifestation of Shakespeare's genius in his verse. The effect of concreteness —of being, we might say, ' realized ' and not merely verbal—

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depends above all on the implicit metaphor introduced with ' deep and broad.' Those adjectives, plainly, describe a river, and, whether we tell ourselves so or not, the presence of a river makes itself felt in the effect of the passage, giving a physical quality to ' contend,' in the third line, that it would not otherwise have had. Prompted by ' honours ' Shakespeare has, in the apprehensive rapidity of his mind, picked up the conventional trope of the king's being the ' fount of honour,' and, characteristically, in his rapid motion, brought it to life—its life, which is a matter of its organic relation to the context, being manifested in the very absence of explicitness. It is this absence of explicitness in the metaphor—of full realization, one might put it—that conditions the hardly noticeable shift to the metaphor of ' loads ' in the next line: the common effect of being borne down by overwhelming profusion covers the shift. [Discussing the passage elsewhere,[2] I have observed that what we see as the inimitable mark of the poet in it is his ability to control realization to the precise degree appropriate in the given place—an ability that clearly cannot be simulated if anything in the least metaphorically complex is offered.] One might, by way of emphasizing that ' realization ' is not offered as a technical term, an instrument of precision, put it this way: it is in the incomplete realization of the metaphors that the realizing gift of the poet and the ' realized ' quality of the passage are manifested. However we apply the term, what we have to consider is always a whole of some complexity: what we have to look for are the signs of something grasped and held, something presented in an ordering of words, and not merely thought of or gestured towards.

Nevertheless, it is still, by this account, local signs the critic should be looking for, this and that in the text to put his finger on in the hope of making an irresistible observation. And it holds that to tell him to scrutinize in particular the metaphor and imagery is to direct his attention the most likely way. But here it may seem that the question of definition properly comes up again. What is metaphor? What is imagery? I do not think that much profit is likely to come of trying to answer these questions directly, in general terms. What would be in place at this point would be a negative—a reminder, for dismissal, of a notion commonly held: it will not do

[2] *How to Teach Reading*, p. 15.

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to think of metaphor as compressed simile, simile being taken as a matter of illustrative correspondence—idea and image, main thought or theme and enlivening parallel.

For making so elementary a point the *Arden* editor's note on the ' dusty death ' passage of *Macbeth* (Act V, Sc. v) would provide a good opportunity. There is no room to deal with that note here. I will instead suggest how, after dealing with examples of the ostensibly simple simile that turns out to be something more complex, one might illustrate the wider bearings of this local analysis on method in Shakespeare criticism. A still greater complexity (one would point out) reveals itself when, reading the first speech in Act I, scene vii of *Macbeth,* we stop at

> . . . pity, like a naked new-born babe . . .

and ask what kind of simile that is. Or rather, we might ask if we found the line (under Pity) in a dictionary of quotations. For actually, in reading the speech, we shouldn't stop at the end of the line, but go on at least to the next phrase,

> Striding the blast,

by when the effect would so have complicated itself that we should hardly start by commenting (as we might if the line stood by itself) that the ' naked new-born babe ' is really not Pity, but the object of pity: the disturbing strangeness of

> a naked new-born babe
> Striding the blast

carries us on beyond such a consideration, and, indeed, away from ' pity.' In fact, the passage, in the movement and structure of its sense, forbids us to stop before the end of the sentence, three lines further on, by when it has become plain that ' pity,' whatever part it may play in the total effect, is certainly not at the centre—certainly doesn't represent the main significance. To bring out fully what this is it is necessary to quote the speech from the beginning:

> If it were done, when 't is done, then 't were well
> It were done quickly: if the assassination
> Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
> With his surcease success ; that but this blow
> Might be the be-all and the end-all here,

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But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'd jump the life to come.—But in these cases,
We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off;
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin, hors'd
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind.—I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other . . .

It is a speech that exhibits Shakespeare's specific genius—an essentially poetic genius that is at the same time essentially dramatic—at its most marvellous. The speech is that of the intensely realized individual, Macbeth, at the particular, intensely realized moment in the development of the poem. Analysis leads us directly to the core of the drama, its central, animating interests, the principles of its life. The whole organism is present in the part. Macbeth, weighing his hesitation, tells himself that it is no moral or religious scruple, deriving its disturbing force from belief in supernatural sanctions. His fear, he says, regards merely the chances of lasting practical success in this world. His shrinking from the murder expresses, he insists, a simple consideration of expediency. Then he proceeds to enlarge on the peculiar heinousness of murdering Duncan, and as he does so that essential datum concerning his make-up, his ignorance of himself, becomes plain. He supposes

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that he is developing the note of inexpediency, and picturing the atrocity of the crime as it will affect others. But already in the sentence invoking the sanctity of hospitality another note begins to prevail. And in the next sentence the speech achieves its unconscious self-confutation:

> Besides, this Duncan
> Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
> So clear in his great office, that his virtues
> Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
> The deep damnation of his taking-off;
> And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
> Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin, hors'd
> Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
> Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
> That tears shall drown the wind.

The ' angels trumpet-tongued ' (which is taken up in ' heaven's cherubin ') and the 'deep damnation ' (clearly expressing Macbeth's own innermost feelings) explain the uncanny oddity of

> pity like a naked new-born babe,
> Striding the blast . . .

What we have in this passage is a conscience-tormented imagination, vivid with terror of the supernatural, proclaiming a certitude that ' murder will out,' a certitude appalling to Macbeth not because of consequences on ' this bank and shoal of time,' but by reason of a sense of sin—the radical hold on him of religious sanctions. The ' pity ' and the 'babe ' carry on the ' meek,' combining to express Macbeth's horrified sense of the unforgivable heinousness of the murder. The vision that inspires the passage is not, though Macbeth (so maintaining a formal continuity from his initial cool self-deception to his imaginative self-exposure) suggests with his ' pity ' that it is, the anticipated reaction of the multitudes whose ' tears shall drown the wind ': it is a vision, dread and inescapable, of an outraged moral order vindicated by supernatural sanctions.[3]

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[3]Mr. Santayana is guilty of an extraordinarily uncritical procedure (see *Tragic Philosophy*, *Scrutiny*, March, 1936) when he takes the

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The closing sentence—

> I have no spur
> To prick the sides of my intent, but only
> Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
> And falls on the other [side]

—provides useful illustrations for countering the unfortunate visual suggestion of ' image ' and ' imagery '; for countering also too simple notions of ' exquisite unity of thought ' (see the *Arden* editor's note on ' dusty death '). Macbeth's 'intent ' of murder is, to his feeling, quite other than himself; as external to himself as an unwilling horse between his thighs ; he can muster no impulse sharp enough to prick it into action. Then, with a rapid change in his psychological relation to the horse, he expresses the sense of difficulty and danger that produces this paralysis—a sense at the same time of the supreme effort required (he is gathered tense for vaulting—this point in the speech is a good instance of the expressive use of line division) and of the terrifying impossibility of making sure that the process once started can be stopped at the point of achievement in view.

Shakespeare, of course, has his own miraculous complexity. Nevertheless, the effects just examined serve in their striking way to enforce a general point. What we are concerned with in analysis are always matters of complex verbal organization; it will not do to treat metaphors, images and other local effects as if their relation to the poem were at all like that of plums to cake, or stones attesting that the jam is genuine. They are worth examining—they are there to examine—because they are foci of a complex life, and sometimes the context from which they cannot be even provisionally separated, if the examination is to be worth anything, is a wide one.

This should be enough to suggest how, in his study of Shakespeare and his use of Shakespeare criticism, the student's critical training would equip him for dealing with the aberrations of both

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' To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow ' speech and opposes it, as if it were Shakespeare's own utterance or represented the total burden of the play, to Dante's

> in la sua volontade è nostra pace.

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Bradley and Wilson Knight. And (what was the main aim) perhaps enough positive illustration has by now been offered to preclude serious misunderstandings about what I mean by 'analysis,' to which I have assigned so important a place. At any rate, my space-allowance runs short; and I can only with the greatest brevity suggest representative exercises in which questions of value-judgment regarding emotional quality, and so on, would be raised. There is the type-contrast between Scott's *Proud Maisie* and Cory's *Heraclitus* (542 and 759 in the *Oxford Book*)—the contrast between the poem that seems to state and present barely without emotional comment, the emotion being generated between the parts when the reader has them in his mind, and the poem that is overtly emotional and incites directly to a 'moved' response, the emotion seeming to lie out there on the page. That *Heraclitus* is sentimental is a judgment that can be enforced. Of Tennyson's *Break, break, break* one wouldn't say this, but certain dangers attending its mode of emotional expression will come up for discussion when the poem in its turn is contrasted with Wordsworth's *A slumber did my spirit seal*. Again, in a related contrast, the superiority of D. H. Lawrence's *Piano* (Poem VIII in I. A. Richards's *Practical Criticism*) over *Tears, idle tears* can be demonstrated in analysis.

Demonstration of the inferiority of Hood's *Autumn* to the poems of Keats from which it derives makes a good approach to the critical study of Keats himself. And with this work might go analytic comparison of characteristic Keatsian verse with (say) Shelleyan and Tennysonian, done explicitly as an induction into the intelligent general reading of all three poets and as an indication how the fuller critique, the comprehensive evaluating description, should be developed. The point I am trying to make here is one of general application: it is that the time-honoured academic way of telling a student to write his essay on 'Wordsworth's thought' or 'Shelley the poet of the revolutionary spirit' or 'Tennyson and Victorian doubt,' and leaving him to the poet's collected works and the guidance of Oliver Elton or the equivalent (including the usual lectures), means an enormous waste of time and spirit. Without a trained reading capacity he cannot profitably attempt the vast and speedy consumption of the printed word nominally expected of him, and examination tests designed to ensure that, untrained, he shall 'really have read the actual authors' are

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futile. But with a trained eye, a critical equipment and knowledge of how to approach he can explore, and read extensively, with decidedly more profit than most of the recommended authorities would seem to have brought from their perusals.

Consider again how much time the literary student is usually expected to devote to Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, and how little is done to help him to acquire a relevant critical equipment. Not only does he need to be intelligent about dramatic verse, he needs to be intelligent too about dramatic conventions and the possibilities of poetic drama—intelligent as only well-directed discussion can be expected to make him. Such discussion would make good use of the appropriate places in Mr. Eliot's critical writings, and would result in the student's being able to bring to bear on his Elizabethan reading some knowledge of Greek drama and a familiarity with Mr. Eliot's own experiments. No amount of scholarship about Pre-Shakespearean drama can be a valuable substitute for this informed intelligence, nor can the ability to summarise the plots of Beaumont and Fletcher. Critically equipped, on the other hand, he has a use for scholarship and can read widely with unfeigned interest and educational advantage.

Academic practice does, of course, prescribe a study of literary criticism; but though in the prescribed reading the student will find drama referred to a good deal, he will not find this equipment he needs, or much help towards acquiring it. And here again we have an illustration of an imposed bad economy. For surely we can generalize and say that the student's dealings with literary criticism (' History and Theory,' or whatever the heading may be) should have for first, chief and essential aim to increase his efficiency as a reader and critic of poems, novels and plays and improve his qualifications for tackling his crowded intellectual programme. But can anyone suppose that if this had been the operative principle Aristotle, Longinus, Sidney, Dryden, Addison and the rest would have had, in the curriculum and on the examination paper, the place they have? To say that they ' raise all the questions ' is obtuse and disingenuous: a man may get high marks on them and remain utterly unqualified for intelligent reading, and no study of them as they are offered is likely to improve anyone's ability to read works of literature, or think about them. The student does indeed need a critical equipment if he is not to waste his time, and

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he must take it *to* the prescribed critics if he is to profit by them at all.

His essential equipment he must acquire in directed discussion of the main critical questions as they come up in practical criticism and are raised in T. S. Eliot's critical work, in the best parts of I. A. Richards, and here and there in places that the qualified director of discussion will know of. Once the student has formed for himself a criterion of intelligent critical thinking and knows what really saying anything about a work of literature looks like, he will be able to improve his equipment in the course of his incidental reading of what good criticism there is. And he will also be able to read without waste Aristotle, Johnson, Coleridge and Arnold and acquire without difficulty what of the 'History of Literary Criticism' may be worth having. As things are, he is not only denied what he needs; he is made to spend himself and blunt his edge on dutiful and unrewarding rote-work (unrewarding except in examination-room profit—you memorize what, prompted by lecturers and other authorities, the good student knows he ought to find in the text).

Illustrations could be multiplied, but perhaps the point has been sufficiently enforced: the student could use his time with very much greater advantage than academic requirements and academic defaults now permit, even in the most enlightened of English Schools. And, unless he is one of those who oughtn't in any case to be reading for Honours in English, it is not extravagant to count on his acquiring, in the allotted time, the competence in literature postulated in my 'sketch.'

F. R. LEAVIS.

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THE POLITENESS OF RACINE

IT is legitimate, and may be valuable, to deduce from a poet's works his judgment on his own age, and, where it is worth having, to present it as a 'message' to our own. But it needs care. A recent critic of Racine, Mr. Martin Turnell[1], has got the message he wanted by misrepresenting his prophet, and thereby done a disservice, perhaps to history, but certainly to literature, which will always have something to learn from this great poet and stylist.

Racine, according to him, is not merely the bold psychologist we all recognise, but ' the direct expression of the life of his time.' 'It is possible to discover searching criticism of contemporary France in almost every line that he wrote,' and contemporary France was a moral chaos resulting from the dissolution of a Catholic world-order which Mr. Turnell idealizes. ' The spiritual life of France,' he writes, ' was being strangled . . . The policy of Louis XIV was to make France safe for dictatorship . . The structure of society was disrupted. Men '—he means the nobility—' were cut off from their estates; they ceased to be human beings . . . at Versailles.' ' The results of this policy . . . only became clear in the cataclysm that overtook France in the next century.' Racine saw them sooner. ' So far from being the laureate of Versailles, he was first and foremost the critic of an age of false stability. He exposed the corruption of the Court in *Britannicus* and still more in *Athalie;* but as a rule . . . he was more concerned with . . . the changes that were taking place in the moral life of the people ' (he means the aristocracy) thanks to the royal policy.

Many will be surprised to see such intentions attributed to a lifelong *protégé* and panegyrist of Louis. I would add that his work

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[1]Review of *Racine* by J. Giraudoux (*Scrutiny,* March, 1938); ' " Athalie " and the Dictators ' (ib., March, 1940); ' Jean Racine ' (*The Tablet,* 30 December, 1939); ' For Jean Racine ' (*Horizon,* August, 1940). These articles quote and repeat one another to some extent; I take all my quotations from the last, which is the fullest exposition of the points I am dealing with.

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has what we may, if we like, regard as a moral, and that it is a different one. The suggestion of direct allusions can be quickly disposed of. There are two corrupt courts in his plays—that of the wicked usurper Nero, and that of the wicked usurper Athalie. The High Priest Joad does preach a sermon on the dangers of kingship which may be a veiled appeal to Louis; he foreshadows the possible abuses, but does not impugn the principle or the practice, of absolute monarchy. We meet a few unscrupulous courtiers: every dramatist has the right to portray rogues, and to make them courtiers if he is depicting a court. The subject of palace intrigue had been introduced with great success by Racine's predecessor and rival, Corneille.

In the thirty-six years during which he held an increasingly favoured place at court, Racine wrote not a word that can fairly be interpreted as condemnation of the social system which protected him. He has left pages to show that it attracted and dazzled him. He was not the only one. Taste, patriotism and religion all strengthened his attachment; if he saw faults, it was with the eye of a lover. We need not attempt to turn this into a virtue in Racine, nor need we excuse what was so natural. But, in the black picture he paints of the world Racine saw and reproduced, Mr. Turnell ignores and obscures elements aesthetically and morally valuable, which Racine rightly prized.

As against Corneille, who, we are told, recognised the claims of the community and gave his heroes a definite place in it, Racine draws characters, according to this critic, who 'have no place in the social order; they have lost their bearings as completely as Frédéric Moreau or any other nineteenth-century hero.' Even the harmless word *palais* in his verse is not, as we might think, the inescapable *mot propre* for the buildings where his princely personages live and move: it has 'a subtle ambiguity' and typifies their rootless existence in a world of 'artificial convention.'

Both terms of the comparison are, I submit, falsely presented. Corneille's characters are either subject to parental authority, in which case they parade their blind obedience, not to law, but to the head of their house; or independent, when, if 'heroes,' they proclaim a willed and rational subordination of all their impulses to the highest good *as they conceive it*—which may be saintliness or honour or revenge or ambition, but has nothing to do with the claims

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of society. In only one of his great plays do the claims of the state constitute this highest good: Horace is a brutal young fascist who deliberately immolates all personal pieties on the altar of the fatherland. Such a personal and aristocratic ethic leads to anarchy, as it did in 1648-1653 with the French nobles on whom Corneille drew for his models.

In Racine's world on the other hand—both the world he lived in and the world he depicted—Mr. Turnell fails to see a most important force of cohesion: a force purely human and social, which may be why it was strong enough to outlive not only Racine but the monarchy. Cornelian heroism produces integrated characters who usually threaten the stability of society: Racine paints an integrated society to which the menace comes from personal instability.

* * * * *

An ideal and a code of politeness had conquered France by 1660, with all the force of a new religion. In one of its aspects, the desire to adorn and sweeten life by courteous and forbearing behaviour, to subject the savage to the constant surveillance of the civilized in man, it had roots in the renaissance. In another, which regulated relations between the sexes by a convention of infinite female supremacy and permanent male submissiveness (better than the reverse, especially if consciously accepted as a convention), it went back to the troubadours. There were excesses (which Racine condemned no less than Molière). *Précieuses ridicules* and *femmes savantes* were a part, though only a part, of the picture. Nearly all lyric and dramatic poetry after, say, 1640 was infected and emasculated; of various possible reasons one will be discussed in a minute. But if the convention was a slavery, it was one willingly accepted and curiously elaborated. If it was stilted, it was also magnificent.

Mr. Turnell stresses the seamy side of the Grand Siècle. The important thing is that it was the seamy side, the side not meant to be shown or thought about. Aspirations matter more than failures in the spiritual history of man. The noble lady in Saint-Simon who had to relieve herself behind a chapel door (not ' in church ') did so with a lively sense, shared by the chronicler of her distressing emergency, of the proprieties she was forced to outrage. Versailles

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(which did not become the seat of government till after Racine had ceased writing for the stage) was only an elaboration of the Paris salon—the application of the proprieties to the idea of kingship. (I am not speaking of the political purpose of Louis, but of the minds of his courtiers.) The Versailles *régime* had begun in the blaze of the most brilliant *fêtes* of the century. It was gilded by the King's military prestige, and extraordinary majesty and charm. Exile from Versailles was the cruellest punishment in the Master's hand.

The Versailles courtiers may have become ' transformed into artificial people '—it depends on the sense you give to *artificial;* it is untrue that they ' ceased to be human beings,' unless it is unbeelike to live in hives; and they were certainly not ' *compelled* to submit to an artificial code of manners which fettered their minds as well as their bodies.' They queued up for the process. And all was not evil in it. The etiquette was severe, unnecessary and ultimately boring; but the waning of Versailles, witnessed by Saint-Simon, was not the waning of the salon. The eighteenth century added its own note of studied informality—so much more sophisticated than formality—and carried it on. Our own manners still bear its imprint.

The eighteenth century was in fact meaner and more prosaic in many ways than the seventeenth. It owes its spurious glamour to the imagination of Watteau and his followers. It was the decadence, the other was the heroic age, of politeness. If only the age of Louis XIV had had a plastic or graphic genius we should understand its greatness. If only Lebrun had been more than grandiloquent, his Greeks and Romans would be the perfect commentary on Racine's.

* * * * *

Racine took the ' claims of society ' seriously. Before we study them at work on his heroes, let us see how they affected the author.

Since Malherbe the same refining spirit had made itself felt in literature: irrelevance and exuberance were pruned and imagination sobered; the rules of composition were tightened up, and the strictest propriety insisted on, in the elevated genres; anxious thought was given to grammar and vocabulary. In short the author learned to respect an ever more discriminating public, and the most discriminating part of that public. Hence what Mr. Turnell calls

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the ' surface ' elegance of Racine, and hence the neatness and tautness of his plots and his prosody, the verbal felicity that comes from accurate calculation of effects.

Society imposed its manners and language on Racine, Archaism was out of fashion; ' poetic diction ' was not synthetic tushery, but a still further refined version of the speech of the salons. How then should his characters speak, if not after the manner of his contemporaries, only better?—And modes of speech influence modes of behaviour.—So they prefaced their words with *Madame* or *Seigneur* (a concession to poetry this, instead of the *Monsieur* used in comedy and real life) just as they bowed and curtseyed on meeting and parting; they observed the etiquette of their rank (critics jumped on Racine once for letting King Pyrrhus leave his throne-room to meet Ambassador Orestes; Unity of Place could not excuse lack of decorum) just as, local colour having luckily not been invented, they wore the clothes of everyday life, with a bit more braid, more jewels, a few more plumes, and perhaps a helmet on the periwig in place of a wide-brimmed hat. And that is the long and the short of the old quarrel about anachronisms in Racine. It applies equally to any other writer before the era of historical self-consciousness. The results can be a little grotesque in bad writers; in the masters they are curious or complex, always humanly true.

So far, for those who do not fear stylization, so good. The contemporary love of convention leaves more disastrous traces. The spiritless fawning swain is an undramatic figure at best; but the convention drags with it a heavy load of metaphors and hyperboles —sighs and flames, wounds and bonds, *ingrates, inhumaines* and *perfides*—dead, one would have thought, when Racine inherited them, since most of them had a successful *début* in antiquity, but yet possessing, to judge by their wearisome reiteration, some magic which has gone from them now and left them as palatable as the scraps on last night's plates. The evil is not irreparable, for after all the worst language leaves something to the speaker.

All this refers to the language of love-making, not to the language of love. Here the convention impinges with different effect. This poet of unbridled passion is the most chaste of writers. Pyrrhus' cruelty, Nero's sadism, the incestuous lust of Phèdre, are all fully indicated, but in a style which no editor has ever felt the call to bowdlerize. Berenice according to history had been Titus'

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mistress for five years; in Racine their relations are full of implied intimacies and complicities which are absent between his pairs of fiancés, but his preface denies that they have contracted *les derniers engagements,* and there is not a word in the text to suggest the contrary, to those who need words. I do not understand how Mr. Turnell can say that he ' is at some pains to emphasize the physical side of love . . . The bed sticks out in Racine's poetry.' As a matter of fact, *lit,* in reference to marriage, occurs ten times in the Marty-Laveaux concordance: five times in the long autobiographical speech of the disreputable Agrippine, but once on the lips of Esther, played by a schoolgirl of Saint-Cyr—if proof were needed that all voluptuous associations were dead in this respectable and antique metonymy.

The bed as the scene of love and lust is not so much veiled by words as pushed into the corner of (nearly all) the speakers' minds. Racine's ' predatory ' lovers—they are not all—aim at spiritual ownership as much as carnal possession. There was an art of circumventing decorum decorously, known as *envelopper les ordures,* but Racine does not use it: he embraces the proprieties so heartily that we might think there was a gap in his realist approach, if the opposite excesses of interpreters like Mr. Turnell were not there to redress the scale. The stress in most of the plays is not on love itself, but on its battle with obstacles: indifference, rivalry, sense of guilt; and on its products: jealousy, cruelty, and a hate ready to turn again into the love from which it is indistinguishable. When tranquil love is allowed to speak, Racine's concession is a slight but tremendously effective increase in simplicity and directness.

His diction usually leans heavily on abstract nouns, personified (sometimes awkwardly) by the verbs that link them:

> Mess voeux ont trop loin poussé leur violence
> Pour ne plus s'arrêter que dans l'indifférence;
>
> Ma haine a besoin de sa vie

—his shorthand for: ' She must not be allowed to die, so that I may punish her.' In the idyllic passages of *Bérénice* he shifts this emphasis to the verb, and the verb, in the most telling lines, is ' to see.'

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Voyez-moi plus souvent et ne me donnez rien.

Elle passe ses jours, Paulin, sans rien prétendre
Que quelque heure à me voir, et le reste à m'attendre.

Depuis cinq ans entiers chaque jour je la vois,
Et crois toujours la voir pour la première fois.

In her utmost humiliation Berenice accepts any terms if only she may stay with Titus:

Je ne vous parle plus d'un heureux hyménée;
Rome à ne vous plus m'a-t-elle condamée?

And, in the elegy of separation:

Que le jour recommence et que le jour finisse
Sans que jamais Titus puisse voir Bérénice,
Sans que de tout le jour je puisse voir Titus?

There are no caresses in Racine. (Love-making in the age of plumes and periwigs must have been awkward.) The delight of a lovers' meeting is represented by its most spiritualized element. Speech might have been another symbol:

Je le vois, je lui parle

says Phèdre, ostensibly of the absent Thesée, really of Hippolyte to whom she is trying to declare her love. But conversation is more of the mind, and is a pleasure shared among all comers. Discreetly, Racine comes as near as he deems it desirable to the exclusive joys of love. It would be easy to show from his works the significance, to him, of the eye, especially averted.

* * * * *

Mr. Turnell has laid all his stress on the violence under the courtly restraint. I have been concerned to restore the balance, lost to us until we see the value of convention with seventeenth-century eyes; for without it our view of Racine is distorted. The two concepts form not only an antithesis at the base of his art, but the two poles of his world; and I am not sure that it is right to speak of them as does Mr. Turnell: 'a surface elegance which does nothing to mitigate the violence of the tumult which goes on beneath . . .

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feelings . . . bound to be in a constant state of eruption in a civilization which had become a façade.' The relation seems to me to be different.

Drama, say French critics, is founded on conflict; whereas social convention exists to remove causes of conflict. In Racine's contemporaries the conventional heroes and lovers are stuffed shirts who need the wildest of romantic imbroglios to drive them into the semblance of action. While their convention was a living ideal they must have had interest as models. Now they are nothing but unreliable documents for social history.

The seventeenth-century courtly ideal played off against its social opposite gives you the *Précieuses ridicules* or the *Femmes savantes*; shift the lighting, and you get the *Bourgeois gentilhomme*. A different mood and a new emphasis give the *Misanthrope*. To make tragedy out of it, find a tension of a higher kind; put the conflict inside your characters.

In one notorious passage of youthful exuberance, of a bad taste never found again in Racine, Pyrrhus tells the captive widow of Hector whose hand he seeks in marriage ' that she is making him suffer all the pain he ever inflicted on his enemies; that he burns with more flames than he ever ignited in Troy; that he was never so cruel as she is.' Those who know the lingo will translate at once: ' I have wronged you, but I am sorry. Have pity, because I love you so.' That is what he wishes to convey. The important thing is that it is not what he means: Andromaque's aversion is not an obligatory move in the game of courtship, and he knows it; he is not her submissive slave, and he has taken care that she knows it. His words preface a threat to kill her baby if she will not have him. One excess, in language, is set off by another, in behaviour.

So that Racine does not obey the convention, but uses it. The volcanic passages where his heroines drop for a few moments to the withering *tu*, signifying that the veneer has cracked and scaled away, owe all their force to the context of *vous—Seigneur—Madame*. It is only in the midst of courtesy that rudeness stands out; only where all are gentle, that violence interests. Racine's men are denied this outlet; the convention makes greater demands on them, and their weapon is irony. Their drama is the elegant play between mask and face. Nor must it be thought that outward courtesy is a mere spice, added for seasoning. Self-respect and self-control are

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the norms of reference; they are even the normal state of the unfortunates whom passion has maddened for the few hours of the crisis. Only yesterday, in spite of their long trial, in spite of the slow working-up of the storm, Oreste, Phèdre (like all their fellows), really were the stately figures they still try to imitate.

> Puisqu'après tant d'efforts ma résistance est vaine,
> Je me livre en aveugle au destin qui m'entraîne.

(Mr. Turnell quotes this couplet for its second line; the first is not without significance.)

> Je mourais ce matin digne d'être pleurée;
> J'ai suivi tes conseils, je meurs déshonorée.

Their fall is conscious and reluctant. When they stop to look back they regret it, as a departure from the safety-line—only Phèdre regrets for moral reasons.[2]

And if we can imagine them surviving their crisis, they would return to outward normality. Pyrrhus had been esteemed by all as a chivalrous soldier, though capable of cruelty under such stresses as few men have to withstand; had he lived he would have dismissed, firmly but apologetically, as an unfortunate incongruity to be ignored, the memory of his torture of Andromaque. Had he not already dismissed that of the sack of Troy?

> Madame, je sais trop à quels excès de rage
> La vengeance d'Hélène emporta mon courage.
> . . . . . .
> Mais enfin je consens d'oublier le passé.

The routine of pose and gesture devised and accepted by reason does not impose virtue on the vicious or make the egotist unselfish; it does not prevent, or greatly mitigate, cruelty and injustice; but it is incompatible with the last horror—the loss of self-control. Its rupture is a symptom, used by Racine as a symbol, of the final stage of passion liberated: the failure of the brakes that makes collision and destruction inevitable.

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[2]Incidentally, to say that she ' gives way *because* it is wrong ' and gets an extra, Baudelairean, kick out of the knowledge, seems to me an anachronism of nearly 200 years.

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The terms of his dramatic formula—passion, especially in the form of sexual desire, and social convention—lay to hand in the life and literature of the day. Racine was far from being the first to use them in play-writing; they were forcing themselves on all writers as two of the great themes of the age. But Racine, alone in his century, possessed the sense of the tragic (Corneille did not), and so was the only one to fit them into a tragic opposition, by taking passion at the point the others dared not contemplate, where it broke the bounds decorum set for it. That he achieved this within the limits of verbal and scenic decorum was an additional triumph.

I repeat: it may be a sufficient explanation to say that the tragic antithesis was dictated by literary considerations; or at least that it presented itself to Racine in the first instance as a result of these considerations. It was the arrangement needed to obtain tragedy from contemporary materials. Nothing prevents us from accepting also, if we like, the theory of one school of critics, that the formula as Racine used it owed much to his Jansenist theological outlook, with its fierce insistance that every impulse of unregenerate man leads straight to sin and damnation. Nor is it at all absurd to think with Mr. Turnell that it was strengthened in him by such analysis as he was able to make of the elements of disorder in the France of Louis XIV.

But here I would begin to make reservations. I am not fully convinced that there was all that much disorder in France between 1664 and 1691; still less that it was visible to the contemporary onlooker; still less that Racine had eyes to look for it; and not at all that he was ' first and foremost ' the critic of his age—whether Mr. Turnell means that he saw himself, or that we should see him, in that capacity.

Racine seems to me to have been a sedulous man of letters rather shut up inside his craft, escaping from it, it is true, to be an acceptable man of the world in his leisure moments, but as much excluded as other men of the world under Louis XIV from politics and political speculation. He lived in a static world governed by God and the King, neither of them subject to scrutiny or reproach from below. Palace intrigue, it is true, he was well placed to study; but he used the theme no oftener than Corneille. ' He was more concerned ' writes Mr. Turnell ' with what has been called " the atmosphere of the century " '. Does this mean that he thinks

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crime passionnel, in which Racine specialized, is more prevalent, or that more young men go to the devil through women, under absolute monarchy than other systems of government?

It is one thing to say: The case in which the world I see can become a fit subject for my art is this—when the irrational passionate elements of the personality are in the act of breaking down the elaborate dams that usually contain them. This can happen; it has happened; the process is well worth studying, and I am the man to do it. It is another thing to say: I see this France as a welter of demoralized souls without foothold, plunging blindly into disaster.

It remains that Racine could not have used the tragic formula suggested by his materials, unless it had been true to human nature as he saw it. If his view had been false, or if he had allowed his view to be falsified in his works, they would have failed. So we can write it down as Racine's belief that happiness lies in civilization, that passion is its enemy, and reason its friend.

Here if we like we can find Racine's ' message,' though perhaps not quite as Mr. Turnell would wish it phrased. The despot's pet becomes the spokesman of the Third Republic against the Third Reich.

R. C. KNIGHT.

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THE THEME OF 'THE ANCIENT MARINER'

THE compelling quality of *The Ancient Mariner,* more than of many poems, is difficult to identify with any confidence. Mr. E. M. Bewley (discussing 'The Poetry of Coleridge' in *Scrutiny,* March, 1940) seems right in dismissing as trivial those very aspects on which conventional adulation is based. And if one dissents from his final judgment some other account of the poem's appeal has to be offered. Mr. Bewley believes that uncertain fragments of a moral outlook, hints of a motive which Coleridge sacrificed to simpler ends, tempt us to attribute deep significance to what is mainly a trifling drama of the supernatural. Coleridge's effective motive, he thinks, ' in the last analysis, was not substantially different from Mrs. Radcliffe's or Monk Lewis's.'

He quotes Coleridge's own description of this motive: ' . . . the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them to be real.' This formula covers several possibilities. One no doubt is such pastime reading as the melodramas of the supernatural. But equally the formula describes the vastly more significant ' excellence ' of dreams and fairy tales. The question is always *what* imaginary situation is presented; whether the result is piffling or significant depends on that. In speaking of the situation I include the potentialities of the characters within it. For what matters in *The Ancient Mariner* is not just that a man was becalmed and haunted but what sort of man he was. Naturally, he was Coleridge; for, as Mr. Bewley says, however detachedly he may have planned the poem he ' could not help drawing in some measure from his full sensibility.'

The first thing, then, is to say what situations Coleridge presents in the poem, what his theme is. One could follow Maud Bodkin (in *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry,* 1934) and show the more or less unconscious symbolism of some of its features. But her analyses, relevant as I think they are, stress too much the detachable significance of parts of the poem and give too little attention to its

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unique whole. One still needs to say quite simply what it seems to be about.

The human experience around which Coleridge centres the poem is surely the depression and the sense of isolation and unworthiness which the Mariner describes in Part IV. The suffering he describes is of a kind which is perhaps not found except in slightly pathological conditions, but which, pathological or not, has been felt by a great many people. He feels isolated to a degree that baffles expression and reduces him to the impotent, repetitive emphasis which becomes doggerel in schoolroom reading:

> Alone, alone, all, all alone,
> Alone on a wide wide sea!

At the same time he is not just physically isolated but is socially abandoned, even by those with the greatest obligations:

> And never a saint took pity on
> My soul in agony.

With this desertion the beauty of the ordinary world has been taken away:

> The many men so beautiful!
> And they all dead did lie . . .

All that is left, and especially, centrally, oneself, is disgustingly worthless:

> And a thousand thousand slimy things
> Lived on; and so did I.

With the sense of worthlessness there is also guilt. When he tried to pray

> A wicked whisper came and made
> My heart as dry as dust.

And enveloping the whole experience is the sense of sapped energy, oppressive weariness:

> For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
> Lay like a load on my weary eye,
> And the dead were at my feet.

This, the central experience, comes almost at the middle of the poem. It is the nadir of depression to which the earlier stanzas

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sink; the rest of the poem describes what is in part recovery and in part aftermath. You need not have been a mariner in a supernatural Pacific in order to have felt this mood. Coleridge knew it well, and *Dejection* and *The Pains of Sleep* deal with closely related experiences.

A usual feature of these states of pathological misery is their apparent causelessness. The depression cannot be rationally explained; the conviction of guilt and worthlessness is out of proportion to any ordinary offence actually committed. In the story of *The Ancient Mariner* Coleridge finds a crime which, in its symbolic implications, is sufficient to merit even his suffering. The Mariner's sin, as Mr. Bewley and others have seen, was that in killing the albatross he rejected a social offering. Why he did so is left quite unexplained. It was enough for Coleridge that this was a dreadful thing which one might do, and one did it. The Mariner wantonly obliterated something which loved him and which represented in a supernatural way the possibility of affection in the world:

> The spirit who bideth by himself
> In the land of mist and snow,
> He loved the bird that loved the man
> Who shot him with his bow.

This for Coleridge was the most terrible possibility among the sins.

The depth of meaning it held for him is indicated in the curious self-exculpation with which he ends *The Pains of Sleep*. That poem is a fragment of case-history recounting three nights of bad dreams:

> Fantastic passions! maddening brawl!
> And shame and terror over all!
> Deeds to be hid which were not hid,
> Which all confused I could not know
> Whether I suffered, or I did:
> For all seem'd guilt, remorse or woe . . .

Characteristically, he assumes that these sufferings must be a punishment for something or other. Yet by the standards of waking life and reason he feels himself to be innocent. He never explicitly mentions what the supposed offence might be. But in the last two lines, when he protests his innocence, the terms in which he does so reveal implicitly what crime alone could merit such punishment:

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Such punishments, I said, were due
To natures deepliest stained with sin . . .
But wherefore, wherefore fall on me ?
To be beloved is all I need,
And whom I love, I love indeed.

Why is he innocent of the fatal sin?—because he aims at nothing beyond affection and union with others, gives no allegiance to more individual interests in the outer world which might flaw his complete devotion. It is only in the light of the last two lines that the introductory section of the poem yields its meaning. Explaining that he is not accustomed to saying formal prayers before going to sleep, Coleridge continues

But silently, by slow degrees,
My spirit I to Love compose.
In humble trust mine eyelids close,
With reverential resignation . . .

And then one realises that he is protesting against being visited with the horrible dreams *in spite of* cultivating submissive affection and so guarding against the one sin that could merit such punishments.

The Ancient Mariner committed the sin. Yet Coleridge knew that by the ordinary standards of the workaday world his act was not, after all, very terrible. Hence the sarcastic stanzas which show the indifference of the other mariners to the real meaning of the deed. At first

Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!

And then,

'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

And Coleridge's concern for the Mariner's unfortunate companions can hardly be called even perfunctory. It is not by the ordinary standards of social life, for the breach of ordinary social obligations, that Coleridge or the Mariner could be condemned; as in *The Pains of Sleep,* he protests his innocence by those standards. It is an irrational standard, having force only for him, by which he is found guilty. *The Ancient Mariner* allowed him to indicate some-

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thing of this by means of the supernatural machinery. The small impulsive act which presses a supernatural trigger forms an effective parallel to the hidden impulse which has such devastating meaning for one's irrational, and partly unconscious, private standards. It is a fiction which permits the expression of real experience.

The total pattern of experience in *The Ancient Mariner* includes partial recovery from the worst depression. The offence for which the dejection and isolation were punishment was the wanton rejection of a very simple social union.[1] One way to recovery is suggested in *The Pains of Sleep*. It is a return to a submissive sense of childlike weakness and distress:

> O'ercome with sufferings strange and wild,
> I wept as I had been a child;
> And having thus by tears subdued
> My anguish to a milder mood . . .

In *The Ancient Mariner* his sufferings have first to reduce him to a dreadful listlessness and apathy. He contrasts his condition then with the calm activity of the Moon[2] going about her ordinary business in the universe, accompanied by the stars which, unlike him, still have their right to be welcomed:

> 'In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.'

He has to reach complete listlessness—itself a sort of submission—before there is any chance of recovery. His state at the turning point is in significant contrast to the desperate activity, the courageous snatching at hope in the direction from which he personally has decided salvation must come, which is suggested earlier

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[1]I purposely avoid discussing Coleridge's work in terms of 'separation anxiety.' His feelings can be described without referring to their possible cause or their earlier forms.

[2]The Moon is one of the interesting theatrical properties of the poem, changing 'her' emotional significance from time to time.

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by his watch for a sail and his final effort of hope:

> I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
> And cried, A sail! a sail!

All this directed effort and expense of spirit is futile in the state of mind which Coleridge describes. Only when his individual striving has sunk to a low ebb does the recovery begin.

This naturally gives the impression, characteristic of such states of depression, that the recovery is fortuitous. It comes unpredictably and seemingly from some trivial accident. This part of the experience Coleridge has paralleled in the supernatural machinery of the tale by means of the dicing between Death and Life-in-Death. To the sufferer there seems no good reason why he shouldn't simply die, since he feels that he has thrown up the sponge. Instead, chance has it that he lives on.

The fact of its being Life-in-Death who wins the Mariner shows how incomplete his recovery is going to be.[3] Nevertheless some degree of recovery from the nadir of dejection does unpredictably occur. It begins with the momentary rekindling of simple pleasure in the things around him, at the very moment when he has touched bottom in apathy:

> Oh happy living things! no tongue
> Their beauty might declare . . .

It is the beginning of recovery because what is kindled is a recognition not only of their beauty but also of the worth of their existence and, by implication, of his own. For he had previously associated himself with them—the thousand thousand slimy things—in denying their right to live when the men were dead:

> ' He despiseth the creatures of the calm. And envieth that they should live and so many lie dead.'

The earlier exclamation, in the depths of self-condemnation, ' The many men, so beautiful!' is not one of simple pleasure in the things around him. He is still absorbed in his self-contempt and uses his

[3]This fact also makes it doubtful how far the poem can usefully be viewed as an expression of 'The Rebirth Archetype' of Maud Bodkin's analysis.

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recognition of other men's beauty only as a further lash against himself. Or, to put it differently, when he was in the depths the only beauty he would consent to see was beauty dead and spoilt; the beauty still present in the world he denied.

His returning joy in living things comes, of course, from his changed attitude to himself and his willingness to look differently on the world. Coleridge made the point in *Dejection*:

> O Lady! we receive but what we give
> And in our life alone does nature live . . .
> Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
> A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
> Enveloping the Earth—
> And from the soul itself must there be sent
> A sweet and potent voice, of his own birth,
> Of all sweet sounds the life and element!

From this one turns to *The Ancient Mariner* at a later stage in the recovery:

> Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
> Then darted to the Sun;
> Slowly the sounds came back again,
> Now mixed, now one by one.

Still later the band of seraphs who

> stood as signals to the land,
> Each one a lovely light

can be associated with

> A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud.

Coleridge accepts sound and light and colour as the simplest adequate expression of the beauty of the world which ebbed and flowed with his own spirits.

In consistent development of the general theme, the Mariner's recovery leads on to reunion with the very simple and humble kinds of social life. He joins the villagers in the formal expression of atonement with each other, and with the source of love, which he sees in their religious worship. But it would be a mistake to think of this as anything like full recovery. For one thing he never again

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belongs to a settled community, but has to pass from land to land. For another thing there is the periodic 'abreaction' and confession that he has to resort to:

> Since then, at an uncertain hour,
> That agony returns:
> And till my ghastly tale is told,
> This heart within me burns.

More important than this sign of imperfect recovery is the contrast between the submissive sociability with which he must now content himself and the buoyancy of the voyager as he first set out:

> The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
> Merrily did we drop
> Below the kirk, below the hill,
> Below the lighthouse top.

Such a voyage (of the sort that fascinated Coleridge in Anson's narratives) entails a self-reliant thrusting forth into the outer world and repudiates dependence on the comfort of ordinary social ties. But Coleridge's anxieties seem to have shown him this attitude taken beyond all bounds and leading to a self-sufficiency which would wantonly destroy the ties of affection. The albatross is killed, and then the penalty must be paid in remorse, dejection, and the sense of being a worthless social outcast. Only a partial recovery is possible; once the horrifying potentiality has been glimpsed in human nature Coleridge dare not imagine a return to self-reliant voyaging. Creeping back defeated into the social convoy, the Mariner is obviously not represented as having advanced through his suffering to a fuller life; and he no more achieves a full rebirth than Coleridge ever could. There is nothing but the crushed admission that he would, after all, have done better to have stayed at home in humble companionship. Even the vigour and excitement of the marriage feast are too daring for him; he needs submissive trustful prayer to a great Father. And the unfortunate 'moral'—He prayeth best, who loveth best All things both great and small—has at least this much aptness, that it stands at the opposite extreme to that wilful rebuttal of affection of which Coleridge sought so earnestly to assure himself that he was guiltless:

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To be beloved is all I need,
And whom I love, I love indeed.

Viewing the poem from this angle, I see little sign of the confused motive which Mr. Bewley suspected. Coleridge's detached, conscious intentions in writing the poem were no doubt mixed (they certainly included that of defraying the cost of the walking tour on which it was planned). But the achievement, whatever the intention, has unity and coherence. True, the poem is not an allegory. There is no need to think that Coleridge could have paraphrased his theme either before or after writing. In this he may be contrasted with Cowper, also drawing upon Anson, in *The Castaway*.[4] All we need suppose is that the fiction Coleridge produced made a special appeal to him and could be handled with special effectiveness because its theme and incidents allowed highly significant though partly unconscious concerns to find expression. This is not to say that he was merely manipulating symbols. The concrete details of the fiction were not *less* but *more* vividly realised because they were charged with something else besides their manifest content.

D. W. HARDING.

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[4]It is casually interesting, from the standpoint of psycho-pathology, to notice that the neurotic Coleridge did depict a return to life, even though an enfeebled life; whereas the psychotic Cowper saw no hope:

No voice divine the storm allay'd,
No light propitious shone,
When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,
We perish'd, each alone.

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MAHLER AS KEY-FIGURE

OF the great composers in the history of European music Mahler is, with the solitary exception of Berlioz, the one who has excited the most controversy. Perhaps ' controversy ' is a strong word with reference to the tepid defence his few English supporters have been able to put up: yet even in England there is a notable lack of agreement as to the reasons *why* Mahler's music is bad, and none of the accepted accounts squares, of course, with the eulogistic, even reverent, attitude to his work which is held, or used to be held, in Austria, Belgium and Holland.

For instance we are told that Mahler is an ' old wind-bag ' who talked so much about his own tragic feelings that he didn't even know what his feelings were; or, more politely, that though Mahler the tragic sufferer was genuine enough in his emotional outpourings he was essentially the romantic egoist and we aren't (being so much more mature and sophisticated) interested in that sort of thing any longer. Conflicting oddly with this individualistic account we have the theory that Mahler is the bourgeois composer *par excellence,* whose aim and function is to ' move masses '; and Dr. Wellesz's thesis, reflecting the prevalent Austrian opinion, that Mahler is not so much a romantic as the end of the classical tradition.

Now it seems to me that there is an element of truth in all these accounts, and Mahler's significance consists most in that he transcends and reconciles them all. His contribution to European musical thought lies in his embracing so much, in his revealing the latent relationships within apparent anomalies—their cross-references in a period of transition.

Let us begin with the most obvious, the sense in which Mahler is indubitably the typical romantic figure. There can be no question that Mahler did talk somewhat pompously about the state of his soul, that he was aware of all manner of inner conflicts which in his music he attemped to resolve; and there can be no question that twentieth-century minds are repelled by the verbal eyewash. Yet it seems to me clear that, after Beethoven, a German composer could only in very exceptional circumstances have avoided a self-dramatizing attitude; and there is a sense in which it is perfectly

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true to say that ' all music is programme music.' Did Mahler, after all, claim much more than this sense? In a letter to Bruno Walter he once remarked that when he listened to music all his doubts and difficulties vanished and he felt ' entirely clear and sure ' —a very revealing sentiment because it suggests that Mahler was aware that his emotional turmoils could have no significance whatever apart from his music. No amount of discussion of the verbal aura can obviate this fact, that the music stands or falls because it is music and until one has listened to and studied it *qua* music—as most of the people in England who are so patronising about it have had neither inclination nor opportunity to do—discussion is not only useless but misleading.

If we concentrate, then, on that aspect of Mahler's romanticism which we can locate in musical terms we see that technically it is associated, as the cult of the personal usually is, with the chromatic (' Wagnerian ') nature of his harmony, and with the exotic (or colouristic) aspects of his orchestral technique. In this respect Mahler, like Wagner and like Delius, marks the end of a cultural epoch, and we can see how the sunset of his voluptuous harmony and rich orchestration wavers into the twilight of the extreme chromaticism and the orchestral exoticisms of early Berg, Schönberg and Webern: the monstrous Beardesleyesque orchestration of the *Gurrelieder* and the Berg *3 Orchestral Pieces* is a more fantastic extension of the gorgeous Mahlerian tapestry, while the hypersubtle, pointilliste scoring of Webern's *7 Orchestral Pieces*, where the shifting tone-colour of each note takes on melodic significance, shows Mahler's exoticism in *reductio ad absurdum*—a musical expression of the M. Teste element in twentieth-century art, realized with an attentuated, ghostly validity.

And yet even in Mahler's most romantic work—consider the beautiful and moving *Kindertotenlieder*—one is aware of a nervous vitality that over-reaches the representative egoistical wallow. Technically I think the source of this strength is in the peculiar rhapsodic nature of Mahler's lyricism so that one cannot say that even in his most nineteenth-centuryish compositions—and remember we are so far examining only Mahler's purely romantic characteristics—Mahler is a poor melodist but rather that in such passages he is a melodist of a very special type. It is instructive in this connection to recall the case of Delius, a composer with whom the

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romantic Mahler has a good deal in common. It has always seemed to me that although it is on the whole the gorgeously shifting chromatic harmony that provides the *modus vivendi* of Delius's music the melody yet provides a sort of decorative arabesque which preserves an individual lyrical volition, is rhapsodically free if not entirely—because it partly depends for its effect upon contrast with the rich harmonic background—a self-subsistent entity. Delius's music is at its best, I think, when this dual value—the sense at once of independence of and interdependence between melody and harmony—is most clearly present, and this is why his finest compositions are those which include a part for voice or solo instrument. The beautiful *Violin* Concerto, in which the soloist showers a soaring golden flight of lyrical rococo over and into the orchestra's sonorous harmonic framework, exhibits his method at its ripest prefection; so, more equivocally, do *Sea-Drift* and the powerful *First Violin Sonata*. The melody here does not generate the harmony, as the most vital kind of melody probably does; but it is certainly not correct to say, following the conventional account which even Mr. Lambert subscribes to, that the harmony generates the melody. The two are separate yet mutually interdependent and the peculiar poised gravity of these works—so much more mature than the dangerous Delian nostalgia—seems to me to be due to this equilibrium.

A similar sort of duality is behind the technique of the romantic Mahler. and here is the real significance of his repeated introduction of the solo voice into his symphonic work. Mahler's solo parts in his symphonies explore the possibilities of vocal declamation in lyrical arabesque with the utmost subtlety of nuance—consider the exquisite Autumn movement from *Das Lied von der Erde*, where the contralto solo intertwines into the mesh of orchestral fabric a silvery line of intimately expressive meditative pathos, a line which, hovering on the brink of tonality, at the same time adds harmonic piquancies to the texture of the orchestral score. I believe this rhapsodic lyricism is the technical equivalent of the quality Mr. Henry Boys referred to when he spoke, in his notes to the H.M.V. recording of the *Ninth Symphony*, of the conventional nature of Mahler's rhetoric and its relation to the baroque tradition in Austrian art. Mahler's rhetoric mayn't after all be so much the product of vulgar sentimentality (as the purely harmonic account would indicate) as a convention quite as legitimate as that of (say) the

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rhetoric of Elizabethan drama. Obviously the achievement is bound to be a delicate one; and even one of his finest works, *Das Lied*, seems to me to fall in parts of the first movement into a relatively cheap emotionalism that is ever so slightly reminiscent of Puccini, that voice pervasively symbolic of the Hollywoodizing of human emotions. But when successful, as in the oriental *melismata* passages from the *Farewell* of *Das Lied*, it is a convention that justifies itself supremely.

These wonderful *melismata* passages—tending away from diatonicism to a linear rather than harmonic conception, often with a pronounced pentatonic feeling, or in elaborate metrical periods similar to those of Asiatic music, with a characteristic use of internal pedals—indicate how Mahler's romantic rhapsody implies a notion of his art which links its (harmonic) comparatively local and topical elements both with the polyphonic past and the linear future. The romantic account, if offered alone, is revealed as patently unsatisfactory; and we are now in a position to examine his relation to musical tradition.

I suppose the most obvious, the simplest relation is his connection with Austrian folk-song. This is behind many of the passages that are stigmatized as ' vulgar ' and are supposed to be so outlandish in works designed to incarnate experiences of such tragic profundity. But of course Mahler approached folk-song in no antiquarian spirit; in one aspect the individualistic Mahler was still one of the Folk himself, just as Schubert had been, with the mould and inflexion of their songs in his blood and bones. As an honest creator he could not have kept the song-spirit out of his music even if he had wanted to; because he was interested first of all in the making of music he knew that he could not solve his ' difficulties ' by denying his personality. Phantasmal and almost macabre as the great Ländler movement of the *Ninth Symphony* becomes in the course of its evolution we can see that even up to 1911, the year in which Mahler died, the kinship with folk-song is still a potent actuality. Traces of a feudal organization of society survived in Austria, of course, beyond Mahler's death until the Great War of 1914; since Mahler spent the creative periods of his life—the summer months—in the country he would have had plenty of first-hand experience of native song and dance.

A second point with reference to Mahler's connection with the

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past in his Roman Catholicism. For all his spiritual turmoils (technically represented by his preoccupation with the nineteenth-century dramatic aspect of the symphonic ideal) he preserved contact with a Catholic, European, polyphonic musical culture so that the great Choral Symphony (No. 8) is in one sense—though it is as we shall see many other things also—the last *big* work to be composed under the influence of a stable religious belief. Of course his Catholicism did not recommend itself conspicuously to the moral and cultural fashions of the decade after his death; I think it is true to say that the incomprehension of his music so arrogantly displayed during this period is due as much to the traditionally religious aspect of his art as to the notoriously unpopular element of personality.

This polyphonic aspect of Mahler's work is intimately associated with the most important of these links with Europe's musical past—his connection with the classical symphonic tradition. Although Mahler's music represents the end of an epoch and is elegiac in feeling, we must remember that it marks the end of a particular civilization—an Austrian culture centred essentially in Vienna, so that Dr. Wellesz is correct in describing him, in an article contributed to the first number of *The Music Review*, as the last of the great line that, beginning with Haydn, extended through Mozart, Schubert, Beethoven, Bruckner; and in this sense Mahler is not so much a rhapsodist as a lyrical melodist in his own right. What, however, is most interesting is precisely how Mahler adapts the classical convention—reconciles it with the other elements of his complex personality—and I think it's by examining this point that we arrive at the core of Mahler's contribution.

He starts—Dr. Wellesz cites numerous examples from the fourth to the seventh symphonies—with the Haydnesque symmetrical phrase: but he injects into the classical phrase something of his personal quality of rhapsodic exaltation, with immense leaps and drooping suspensions; stretches and modifies it until the terminal form of the melody is revealed only by a process of gradual accumulation. In so doing the phrase inevitably loses its polished balanced urbanity, becomes a structure relatively plastic and asymmetrical, implying in its length and freedom a tendency away from the diatonic dominant-tonic relation towards a more polyphonic notion of technique; a notion one facet of which is exemplified in the composer's increasing preoccupation with

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orchestration as the significant delineation of each particular part. The Italian element in Mahler—conspicuous in most representative Austrian art—is here explicit, and the wheel has come full circle. For Haydn's warm and glowing periods had clipped the free vocal phrase of the sixteenth and seventeenth century Italian madrigalists into the symmetrical diatonic instrumental phrase. Starting from Haydn, Mahler stretches out the phrase, feeds it, until he arrives once more at principles having analogies with those which were implicit in the music of the Italian polyphonists. To reconcile these principles with the dramatic symphonic ideal was the real struggle—or at least the musical manifestation of it—behind his working life. After the choral symphony one would have thought that he could not again tackle an instrumental form; that he did so indicates how complex was the problem, how indirect the solution. The first movement of the *Ninth Symphony*, perhaps Mahler's most stupendous creation, might be said to symbolize the struggle, for the whole movement, embracing as it does Mahler's most astounding excursions into a linear atonality that carries us into a new, strange and unearthly universe, is enclosed within a gigantic dominant-tonic progression. Here is the exhaustive working out of the problem which Schubert had tentatively touched on in the lyrical nature and breadth of his subjects in the great posthumous piano sonatas—works whose ' heavenly length ' is usually ascribed to the ' inspired ' composer's incapacity to deal with the academic forms, despite the fact that his sketch-books have now revealed that he took the utmost pains over them and was aware, however partial his success, of what he was trying to do. The notorious length of Mahler's symphonic movements, with their groups of melodic motives rather than themes, is a phenomenon more extreme than, but directly parallel to, the case of Schubert: not at all due to congenital garrulousness but to the nature of the problem with which he was obsessed.

Mahler arrived, then, at a technique recovering contact with that of the Italian madrigalists: but he was not to sing with their proud faith or their clear serenity. For one thing, he was by this time pitifully ill, and he worked in the conditions that immediately preceded the collapse of the old Austrian regime: deeper than this, and more far-reaching, he lived in a more self-conscious age. Though he transcended he did not dispense with his quality of personal rhapsody and his polyphony, once achieved, drooped, in

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the music of his last years posterior to the *Eighth Symphony*, into a mournful fragmentariness that shows how heavy with world-weariness the wings of his lyricism have grown. This fragmentariness is quite distinct from the harmonic disintegration of chromaticism, for it is linearly, melodically conceived; it is a polyphony that bursts with its rhapsodic exaltation or with its pathos bitterly breaks. It is not the stable voice of a Palestrina or a Bach: but it has this much in common with them, that whereas harmonic chromaticism, in Wagner or Delius or in some of Mahler's own earlier work, usually represents a personal pre-occupation with and disruption of the senses, the piteous melodic fragmentariness of the coda to the *adagio* of the *Ninth Symphony* is more than personal and sensuous and may be said to symbolize the disintegration of a whole world—of a conception of society and a mode of belief.

The end of a world: and yet, it may be also, the birth-pangs of a new. For just as the chromatic-harmonic and orchestral-exotic elements of Mahler's work look forward to those elements in the work of Schönberg, Berg and Webern which are the last nocturnal glimmer of romanticism, so the fragmentary polyphony of his final compositions looks forward to those elements in the music of the atonalists which are expressive of a strange realm of feeling, a newly awakened sense, which may yet play an important evolutionary part in music's future: looks towards and at the same time transcends them (with the possible exception of some of the finest work of Berg, his pupil and disciple), being more clearly realized, more glassily, dangerously calm in its other-worldliness, its linear angularity, its translucent orchestral texture. The precise degree of this evolutionary significance is difficult to estimate, since we cannot speculate with conviction upon the direction which the formulation of musical language will take. I have written previously in these pages of Edmund Rubbra's attempt to deal with the same symphonic-polyphonic problem that preoccupied Mahler, perhaps the most deep-seated of all the problems of contemporary music: and it may be that his stable and traditional solution—which, tending towards the re-creation of the old modal and diatonic technique rather than (like Mahler's) towards the search for a new language through the dissipation of the old, is as utterly distinct from the Austrian composer's as is the essence of his sensibility—offers the most fruitful as well as (in a sense) the most logical way

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out. On the other hand, the culture of the future, if there is any, may well be of an order such that Rubbra's traditionalism would be, for all the freshness of its contemporary reinterpretation, inappropriate to it; pretty certainly such culture will be relatively amorphous and international. In this case the twelve-tone technique (and behind it some aspects of the work of Mahler) might have more than the iconoclastic significance of having destroyed, by unequivocally accepting equal temperament and thereby establishing the absolute liberty of the semitone, the harmonic conceptions on which European music has been based for some nine centuries: notwithstanding its temporary arbitrariness it might, in the course of time, lead to a new linear conception of music founded, like the music of Asia and the Orient, on microtonal inflexions within a framework of the absolute consonances; the dreary rhythmic flaccidity of most twelve-tone music may possibly be a kind of growing-pain which music is suffering in passing from the relatively time-obsessed European rhythmic sense to something resembling the almost ungraspably slow-rhythmic periods of (say) Japanese music. Patently the polyrhythmic experiments of the Americans would be relevant to the evolution of such a music and, for better or worse, it is at least feasible that the music of a vast international society such as we envisage might resemble the timeless and placeless music of eastern civilizations more than the comparatively topical and local idioms of European music as we have so far known it, though it would have, of course, to be an entirely indigenous product.

Perhaps, should musical history take this particular course, the most significant composer with reference to the *immediate* future of musical language will be Bartók. For the technique explored in his recent works reconciles a legitimate extension of the classical, eighteenth-century, melodic conception of dissonance with principles of line-drawing comparable with those of Asiatic music, so that he provides as it were a compromise, a half-way house, between two musical worlds—not so much between western and eastern as between the traditional European world and the hypothetical, more international, future that may be presaged in some duodecuple music.

However this may be—and it is too early, yet, to tell—the salvation of the symphony symbolized in Rubbra's No. 3, or the

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disintegration of it symbolized in Mahler's No. 9, offers a choice of ways of more than technical significance. We can see, in this remarkable *Ninth Symphony* of Mahler, the main problems of European music—the polyphonic principle of the sixteenth century, the symphonic ideal of the classical tradition, the nineteenth-century cult of the personal and dramatic, the baroque notion of rhetoric, the twentieth-century explorations into an 'unterrestrial' linear counterpoint—all touched upon and synthesized. I doubt if there is any single work that can shed more light upon the difficulties of the composer in relation to the contemporary world. And it contains music wild and passionate and painfully beautiful which only those whose response has been atrophied by our sophisticated refusal to feel anything without the 'ironic' protection of intellectual canniness can fail to recognise as the expression of a spirit at once noble and incisive, of an age which, if in some respects outmoded, has much to teach us if ever the 'new world' so frequently discussed is to be, in reality, born.

W. H. MELLERS.

NOTE.

The following recordings of works by Mahler are available:

Kindertotenlieder, sung by Heinrich Redkemper with orchestra. [Decca]

Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen, sung by Kerstin Thorsborg, with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Bruno Walter. [Columbia]

Adagietto from Symphony No. 5 in C minor: The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Bruno Walter. [H.M.V.]

Symphony No. 2 in C minor: Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Eugene Ormandy (with soloists and chorus). [H.M.V.]

Das lied von Erde: Kerstein Thorborg, Charles Kullman and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Bruno Walter. [Columbia]

Symphony No. 9: Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Bruno Walter. [H.M.V.]

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HENRY THE FIFTH

THERE are, among Shakespeare's plays, those which seem to have eluded criticism by their very simplicity. Among them is certainly *Henry V*. It is not, by Shakespearean standards, a difficult play. There is no closely-woven web of imagery to disentangle, no elusive personal ' symbolism ' to be explained. The plot is plainly historical and the underlying purpose, a study in the conditions and limitations of successful kingship, clearly defined. Yet few plays have been so unfortunately received. Some critics—and among them the best—have passed the play by, treated it with a suggestion of boredom; whilst for others, less discerning, it has become a mine of commonplaces and a quarry for patriotic texts. Either view ignores, among other things, the fact that *Henry V* does not stand alone. Shakespeare's interest in political conduct and its human implications was, at this period, intense and continuous. The general theme of *Henry V*, already approached in *Richard II* and developed in the two parts of *Henry IV*, is the establishment in England of an order based on consecrated authority and crowned successfully by action against France. The conditions of this order, which is triumphantly achieved by the new King, are moral as well as political. The crime of regicide which, by breeding internal scruples and nourishing external revolt, had stood between Bolingbroke and the attainment of peace, no longer hangs—unless as a disturbing memory—over Henry V, and the crusading purpose which had run as an unfulfilled nostalgia through the father's life is replaced by the reality, at once brilliant and ruthless, of the son's victorious campaign.

This, as critics have not always realized, is less a conclusion than a point of departure for the understanding of *Henry V*. It was the conditions of kingship, rather than its results, that really interested Shakespeare, whose emphasis falls, not upon the king's success, but upon the sacrifice of common humanity which it involves. It is significant that he takes up almost immediately the theme of Henry's ' miraculous ' transformation from dissolute prince to accomplished monarch and gives it a setting of political intrigue which barely conceals the underlying irony. The opening scene is,

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in this respect, full of meaning. A bill is to be passed, as prelude to the new reign, which will deprive the Church of ' the better half ' of her temporal possessions; and the bishops of Canterbury and Ely, with pondered diplomatic cunning, are debating the possibility of evading a measure which would ' drink deep,' which would, indeed, ' drink the cup and all.' The remedy lies, to Canterbury's mind, in the virtues of the King, who is ' full of grace and fair regard,' and moreover, most conveniently, ' a true lover of the holy church.' In words which deliberately underline the incredible, the unmotivated nature of the change so suddenly wrought in Henry. Canterbury proceeds to describe these virtues:

> Never was such a sudden scholar made;
> Never came reformation in a flood
> With such a heady currance, scouring faults;
> Nor never Hydra-headed wilfulness
> So soon did lose his seat, and all at once,
> As in this king.

Never, indeed; and there is something unreal, more than a hint of deliberate exaggeration in the studied artificial phrases with which the Archbishop proceeds to particularize the royal gifts:

> Turn him to any course of policy,
> The Gordian knot of it he will unloose,
> Familiar as his garter; that, when he speaks,
> The air, a chartered libertine, is still,
> And the mute wonder lurketh in men's ears,
> To steal his sweet and honey'd sentences.

The apparent servility of the prelate ends by casting an indefinable doubt upon the very reformation he is describing. That Henry should be able so suddenly to undo ' the Gordian knot ' of policy may pass, but that he should do it negligently, ' familiar as his garter,' passes belief: and the suggestion of cloying persuasiveness behind the reference to ' his sweet and honey'd sentences ' makes us question, not only the sincerity of the speaker, but that of Henry himself. The thing, to be true, must be a miracle; and ' miracles,' as Canterbury himself points out in a most damaging conclusion, ' are ceased.'

Shakespeare's treatment of Henry's transformation needs to be

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considered in the light thrown upon it by the preceding plays. Finding it, of course, in his sources, he seems to have fastened upon it from the first as peculiarly relevant to his purpose. Prince Hal's first soliloquy at once foreshadows it and explains its animating spirit:

> So, when this loose behaviour I throw off
> And pay the debt I never promised,
> By how much better than my word I am,
> By so much shall I falsify men's hopes;
> And like bright metal on a sullen ground,
> My reformation, glittering o'er my fault,
> Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes
> Than that which hath no foil to set it off.
> I'll so offend, to make offence a skill,
> Redeeming time when men least think I will.
>
> (*Henry IV—Part I.* Act I, Sc. ii)

The note of calculation, therefore, is present from the first, and as the Prince's character develops through the two plays dealing with his father's reign, it is most noticeably deepened and intensified by contrast with Falstaff. Shakespeare not only accepted the artistic difficulty involved in the Prince's rejection of his former friend, he wove it into the structure of his play. The cleavage between the two men is only a projection of one, fundamental to his purpose, between unbridled impulse, which degenerates into swollen disease, and the cold spirit of successful self-control, which inevitably becomes inhuman. The Falstaff of Part II is given an altogether new burden of lechery, age, and disease. When King Henry denounces him as ' So surfeit-swell'd, so old, and so profane,' he makes a true criticism which would not have seemed excessive to an Elizabethan audience; and he backs it with the austerity of a great religious tradition when he adds:

> Make less thy body hence, and more thy grace.

Yet, though we must take the King's words at their own value, the same applies to Falstaff's criticisms of the royal family. Lancaster, whose deceit wins a victory over the rebels at Gaultree Forest, is in his eyes ' a young, *sober-blooded boy*,' one of those who ' when they marry, get wenches.' The flexibilty and richness of Falstaff's

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prose in a succession of phrases like ' apprehensive, quick, forgetive, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes ' only emphasizes by contrast the coldness, almost the perversion, which characterizes the successful kings and generals of these plays. Prince Hal in *Henry IV—Part II* strikes a note of calculating vulgarity, which he regards as a necessary condition of his success. His remark to Poins —' My appetite was not princely got '—is highly typical. It implies a contrast between the natural sensual processes (' appetite,' of course, in connection with the consuming desires of the ' blood,' is a word which constantly interested Shakespeare) and the indifference to humanity which is required of the princely state. This contrast, as it affects the mature King, is the theme of *Henry V*.

It is a theme, once more, closely related to Shakespeare's maturing interests and destined to unfold itself progressively in his great series of tragedies. The problem of political unity, or ' degree,' and that of personal order are brought in the course of these historical plays into the closest relationship. Just as the state, already in *Henry IV—Part II*, is regarded in its divisions as a diseased body ravaged by a consuming fever of its various members, so is the individual torn between the violence of his passions and the direction of reason; and just as the political remedy lies in unquestioned allegiance to an authority divinely constituted, so does personal coherence depend upon the submission to reason of our uncontrolled desires. The link between the two states, political and personal, is provided in these plays by concentration upon the figure of the King. The problem of the state becomes, in a very real sense, that of the individual at its head. The King, who rightly demands unquestioning allegiance from his subjects, is first called upon to show, through the perfection of his self-control, a complete and selfless devotion to his office. The personal implications of that devotion are considered in *Henry V*.

It demands, in the first place, an absolute measure of self-domination. Called upon to exercise justice and shape policies for the common good, the King can allow no trace of selfishness or frailty to affect his decisions. He must continually examine his motives, subdue them in the light of reason; and this means that he is engaged in a continual struggle against his share of human weakness. This struggle, as I have already suggested, is presented in terms of one between passion and the controlling reason. The

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mastery of passion and its relation to action are themes which *Henry V* shares with most of the plays written by Shakespeare at this time. Such control, admittedly essential in a king, is infinitely dangerous in its possible consequences. It turns easily, almost inevitably, to cruelty and selfishness. Sonnet XCIV is decisive on this point:

> They that have power to hurt and will do none,
> That do not do the thing they most do show,
> Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,
> Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow;
> They rightly do inherit heaven's graces . . .

The gap, so momentous and yet so slight, between Hamlet's rather abstract longing for the man 'that is not passion's slave,' and Angelo, who emphasizes his self-control and ends by an abject surrender to the claims of 'blood,' is here openly stated. The virtuous man is he who, without exercising it, has 'power to hurt,' the man who is cold, slow, impassive as stone before the claims of his own humanity. He seems, indeed, in full possession of his impulses, but his control is only separated by a continual and conscious effort from cruelty and the satisfaction of desires which long denial has set increasingly on edge. The similarity of the King's position is obvious. He too has power to hurt and may easily abuse it: he too, whilst moving others, must keep the firmest check upon his impulses and watch sleeplessly over his judgment. And he too—we might add—may easily fall from his position of vigilance into an unrestrained and savage indulgence. If this is the just man, in short, Henry V is fairly representative of him.

The circumstances of Henry's first appearance before his court make this clear. The subject under discussion is the action shortly to be taken by the freshly united kingdom against the realm of France. The idea of war has obviously been already accepted. Henry does not, in reality, look for disinterested advice. He prompts the subservient Archbishop, at each step, not without a touch of irony, to the expected answer:

> My learned lord, we pray you to proceed
> And justly and religiously unfold
> Why the law Salique that they have in France
> Or should or should not bar us in our claim. . . .

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And then, when the matter has been expounded to his satisfaction:

> May I with right and conscience make this claim?

The King's mind, in short, is already made up, and his decision only awaits public confirmation. The perfunctory flatness of Canterbury's exposition, which no one could possibly hear without indifference, contrasts most forcibly with the rhetoric with which he and his fellow-courtiers underline what is obviously a foregone conclusion:

> Gracious lord,
> Stand for your own; unwind your bloody flag;
> Look back into your mighty ancestors.

Already, however, another theme of deeper significance has made itself felt in Henry's utterances: the theme of the horrors of war and, by implication, of the responsibility which weighs upon the king who would embark upon it:

> Therefore take heed how you impawn our person,
> How you awake our sleeping sword of war:
> We charge you, in the name of God, take heed;
> For never two such kingdoms did contend
> Without much fall of blood; whose guiltless drops
> Are everyone a woe, a sore complaint
> 'Gainst him whose wrongs give edge unto the swords
> That make such waste in brief mortality.

Most of Shakespeare's conception of the King is already implicit in this speech. Throughout the play, Henry is not deaf to the voice of conscience. It pursues him, in fact, with almost superstitious insistence to the very eve of Agincourt, when the memory of his father's crime against his sovereign is still present in his mind:

> Not to-day, O Lord,
> O, not to-day, think not upon the fault
> My father made in compassing the crown. (IV, i)

Bolingbroke's misdeed is by now only a memory, but here, at the outset of Henry's proposed enterprise in France, the same kind of misgiving is already present. The awareness that his victories must be brought at a terrible price in bloodshed and human suffer-

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ing remains with him throughout the play; but—and here is the flaw essential to the character—so does his readiness to shift the responsibility upon others, to use their complacence to obtain the justification he continually, insistently requires. Take heed, he warns the prelate, ' how *you* impawn our person,' ' how *you* awake the sleeping sword of war '; for

> we will hear, note, and believe in heart
> That what you speak is in *your* conscience wash'd
> As pure as sin in baptism.

Henry's political success is definitely associated, in the mind of Shakespeare, with this ability to override his conscience. Once Canterbury has spoken, once the dutiful moral echo has been duly obtained, the very ruthlessness which seems to have disturbed him at the opening of the scene enters into his own rhetorical utterance:

> Now we are well resolved ; and, by God's help,
> And yours, the noble sinews of our power,
> France being ours, we'll bend it to our awe,
> Or break it all to pieces. (I, ii)

The reference to conscience, the inevitable preface to each of Henry's utterances, remains in the propitiatory aside ' by God's help '; but, once it has been uttered, the sense of power implied in the cumulative force of ' sinews ' joined to the verbs ' bend ' and ' break,' takes possession of the speech. This overriding—for in the last analysis it is nothing else—of conscience by the will to power is a process which constantly repeats itself in Henry's utterances.

But there is, in Shakespeare's interpretation of the character, a further subtlety of analysis. As the play proceeds, we become increasingly aware that there is in Henry an uneasy balance, already reminiscent of Angelo, between unbridled passion and cold self-control. The latter element, exercised even to the exclusion of normal human feeling, has been present in him from the first. Prince Hal shows it, as we have already noted, in his first soliloquy when he announces his utilitarian attitude to the company he is keeping, and it is strongly felt, of course, in the rejection of Falstaff. Such control is, indeed, an essential part of his political capacity; but it has behind it, in addition to the strain of inhumanity, an unmistakable sense of constraint which makes itself felt in

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his greeting to the French ambassador:

> We are no tyrant, but a Christian king;
> Unto whose grace our passion is as subject
> As are our wretches fettered in our prisons.

The harshness of the comparison is, to say the least of it, remarkable. Such self-control is necessarily precarious; the passions, held in subjection, 'fettered,' treated with a disdain similar to that which, as Prince Hal, he has already displayed to normal human feelings when his success as monarch depended upon the renunciation of his past, may be expected to break out in forms not altogether creditable. Almost at once, in fact, they do so. The French ambassadors, in fulfilling their mission by presenting him with the Dauphin's tennis-balls, touch upon Henry's most noticeable weakness: they expose him to ridicule and, worst of all, they refer—by the observation that 'You cannot revel into dukedoms here'—to the abjured, but not forgotten past. Henry's reaction, in spite of the opening affirmation of his self-control, takes the form of one of those outbursts which are habitual with him whenever his will is crossed. As when France was to be 'bent' or 'broken,' his rhetoric, measured and even cold on the surface, is full of accumulated, irrepressible passion:

> When we have match'd our rackets to these balls,
> We will in France, by God's grace, play a set
> Shall strike his father's crown into the hazard.

The reference to 'God's grace,' rarely omitted from Henry's utterances, clearly befits a 'Christian king'; but the note of resentment which rises through the speech and finally takes complete control of it, is undeniably personal. It rankles in the utterance until the real motive, scarcely concealed from the first, becomes at last explicit:

> we understand him well,
> How he comes o'er us with our wilder days
> Not measuring what use we made of them.

The personal offence, once mentioned, banishes every consideration of conscience. The horrors of war, the slaughter and misery attendant upon it, are mentioned once again, but only—as so often

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in Henry—that he may disclaim responsibility for them. The tone of the utterance rises to one of ruthless and triumphant egoism:

> But *I* will rise there with so full a glory
> That *I* will dazzle all the eyes of France,
> Yea, strike the Dauphin blind to look on us.
> And tell the pleasant prince this mock of his
> Hath turned his balls to gun-stones ; and his soul
> Shall stand sore charged for the wasteful vengeance
> That shall fly with them: for many a thousand widows
> Shall this his mock mock out of their dear husbands;
> Mock mothers from their sons, mock castles down;
> And some are yet ungotten and unborn
> That shall have cause to curse the Dauphin's scorn.

'*I* will rise there': '*I* will dazzle all the eyes of France.' The Dauphin's gibe has set free Henry's fettered passions and they express themselves frankly in a cumulative vision of destruction. The tone of the utterance—the impact of the verb 'strike,' the harsh reference to the balls which have been turned to gun-*stones*, the sense of irresistible, ruinous force behind 'mock castles down'—reflects the new feeling and reminds us of the, later more masterly picture of Coriolanus in action.[1] The sense of power, inhuman and destructive, is at last unleashed in the King. The responsibility for coming events, already assumed by the Archbishop, has now been further fastened upon the Dauphin, and Henry is in a position to wind up the picture of his coming descent upon France with a phrase that incorporates into his new vehemence the convenient certainty of righteousness—

> But all this lies within the will of God,
> To whom I do appeal.

No doubt the conviction is, as far as it goes, sincere; for the will of God and the will of Henry, now fused in the egoistic passion released by the Dauphin's jest, have become identical.

It is not until the opening of the third Act that the characteristic qualities of Henry's utterances and preparations are openly translated into action. The poetry of war in this play deserves

[1] *e.g. Coriolanus.* Act II, Scene ii.

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careful attention, for much of it is unmistakably associated with the element of constraint already noted in Henry himself. The rhetoric with which the King incites his men to battle before the walls of Harfleur has about it a strong flavour of artificiality and strain. There is about his picture of the warrior something grotesque and exaggerated, which almost suggests the caricature of a man:

> imitate the action of the tiger ;
> Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
> Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage;
> Then lend the eye a terrible aspect;
> Let it pry through the portage of the head
> Like the brass cannon; let the brow o'erwhelm it
> As fearfully as doth a galled rock
> O'erhang and jutty his confounded base,
> Swill'd with the wild and wasteful ocean.
> Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide,
> Hold hard the breath and bend up every spirit
> To his full height. (III, i)

There is about this incitation something forced, incongruous, even slightly absurd. The action of the warrior is an imitation, and an imitation of a wild beast at that, carried out by a deliberate exclusion of ' fair nature.' The blood is to be ' summoned up,' the sinews ' stiffened ' to the necessary degree of artificial bestiality, whilst the involved rhetorical comparisons which follow the references to the ' brass cannon ' and the ' galled rock ' strengthen the impression of unreality. In stressing the note of inhumanity, Shakespeare does not deny the poetry of war which he expresses most fully in certain passages from the various prologues of this play;[2] but, as later in *Coriolanus*, he balances the conception of the warrior in his triumphant activity as ' a greyhound straining at the leash ' against that, not less forcible, of a ruthless and inhuman engine of destruction. The mastery of phrase and rhythm is far less developed, the prevailing tone far more immature than in the Roman tragedy; but the immaturity which is reflected in the convolutions of the verse is not such that the critical purpose cannot make itself felt. The ruthlessness, as well as the splendour of the

[2] *e.g.* Prologues to Act III and Act IV.

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warrior, are given in *Coriolanus* an expression incomparably finer ; but both are already present and fully conscious in the earlier play.

Henry's treatment of the governor and citizens of Harfleur, immediately after this apostrophe, relates this conception of the warrior more clearly to strains already apparent in the King's own character. Shakespeare, not for the first time, places the two scenes together to enforce a contrast. The words in which Henry presents his ultimatum are full of that sense of conflict between control and passion which is so prominent in his first utterances. The grotesque inhumanity of his words is balanced, however, by a suggestion of tragic destiny. Beneath his callousness is a sense that the horrors of war, once unloosed, once freed from the sternest self-control, are irresistible. His soldiers, he warns the governor, are still held uneasily in check. ' The cool and temperate wind of grace,' whose control over passion has already been indicated by Henry as the distinctive mark of a Christian king, still exercises its temporary authority; but ' licentuous wickedness '—the adjective is noteworthy—and ' the filthy and contagious clouds ' of ' *heady* murder ' threaten to break out at any moment. In his catalogue of the horrors of unbridled war stress is laid continually upon rape and the crimes of ' blood.' The ' fresh-fair virgins ' of Harfleur will become the victims of the soldiery, whose destructive atrocities are significantly referred to in terms of ' liberty '—

> What rein can hold licentuous wickedness
> When down the hill he holds his fierce career?

The process of evil, once unleashed, proceeds along courses fatally determined; but Henry, as usual, having described them in words which lay every emphasis upon their horror, disclaims all responsibility for them, just as he had once disclaimed all responsibility for the outbreak of the war. The whole matter, thus taken out of his hands, becomes indifferent to him:

> What is't to me, *when you yourselves are cause,*
> If your pure maidens fall into the hand
> Of hot and forcing violation?

Yet this very assertion of indifference implies, at bottom, a sense of the tragedy of the royal position. Only this denial of responsibility,

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Shakespeare would seem to say, only the exclusion of humanity and the acceptance of a complete dualism between controlling 'grace' and the promptings of irresponsible passion, make possible that success in war which is, for the purposes of this play, the crown of kingship.

For it would be wrong to suppose that Shakespeare, in portraying Henry, intends to stress the note of hypocrisy. His purpose is rather to bring out certain contradictions, human and moral, which seem to be inherent in the notion of a successful king. As the play proceeds, Henry seems to be increasingly, at least in the moral sense, the victim of his position. The cunning calculations of the Archbishop, with which the play opens, have already given us a hint of the world in which he moves and which he has, as King, to mould to his own purposes; and the treasonable activities of Cambridge, Grey, and Scroop are further indications of the duplicity with which monarchs are fated by their position to deal. The complexity of the situation explains the curiously equivocal tone of the references to loyalty in the scene (II, ii). It seems strange that Exeter should say that the King has 'dull'd and cloy'd' his followers with his gracious favours; and the political instability which Henry has inherited from his father is implied in the dubious tone, combining acidity and sweetness, of Grey's statement that—

> these that were your father's enemies
> Have steep'd their galls in honey.

There are numerous parallels for this imagery of the palate, this sensibility to contrasted tastes, in *Troilus and Cressida*, parallels which—in plays of the same period—are certainly significant. Somewhere at the heart of this court, as in the heroic world of Troy, there is a fundamental fault which must constantly be allowed for by a successful king. It appears to Henry, in his dealings with the conspirators, as something deep-rooted enough to be associated with the original Fall of man:

> Seem they religious?
> Why, so did'st thou: or are they spare in diet,
> Free from gross passion or of mirth or anger,
> Constant in spirit, not swerving with the blood,

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> Garnish'd and decked in modest complement,
> Not working with the eye without the ear,
> And put in purged judgment trusting neither?
> Such and so finely bolted didst thou seem:
> And thus thy fall hath left a kind of blot,
> To mark the full-fraught man and best indued
> With some suspicion. I will weep for thee;
> For this revolt of thine, methinks, is like
> Another fall of man. (II, ii)

It is remarkable that Henry, in meditating upon this betrayal, should return once more to that theme of control, of freedom from passion, which is so prominent in his own nature. Much in the expression—notably the references to ' diet ' and purging and the presence of adjectives like ' garnish'd ' and ' bolted ' drawn from material processes to express a moral content—recalls the problem plays. There is the same tendency to labour in the versification and the same struggle to convey by a difficult concentration of imagery a spiritual condition that obstinately refuses to clarify itself in the expression. By concentrating on the functioning of the body, and on the sense of mutual divergence between eye, ear, and judgment in the infinitely difficult balance of the personality, Shakespeare sets spiritual control in contrast with a sense of anarchy which proceeds, most typically, from his contemplation of physical processes. ' Gross passion '—the adjective is significant —is associated with the irrational ' swerving of the blood,' and the judgment which controls it needs to be ' purged ' by fasting (' spare in diet ') before it can attain a scarcely human freedom from ' mirth or anger.' By emphasizing the difficult and even unnatural nature of such control, Shakespeare casts doubt, at least by implication, upon that of Henry himself; but it is also seen to be necessary, inseparable from his office. The administration of justice, upon which depends order within the kingdom and success in its foreign wars, demands in the monarch an impersonality which is almost tragic and borders on the inhuman. The state must be purged of ' treason lurking in its way ' before it can be led, with that single-mindedness of purpose which we have already found to involve in Henry a definite sacrifice of common humanity, to the victorious enterprise in France.

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It will be clear by now that *Henry V* represents, however tentatively, a step in the realization of themes only fully developed in the tragedies. Inheriting from his material a conception of Henry as the victorious king, perfectly aware of his responsibilities and religiously devoted to the idea of duty, Shakespeare seems to emphasize the difficulties of the conception, the obstacles, both personal and political, which lie between it and fulfilment. These difficulties, however, never amount to a questioning of the royal judgment. Even in his decisive debate with Williams and Bates on the eve of Agincourt (IV, i), where the implications of his power are most searchingly discussed, the king's right to command is never in doubt. The claims of authority, which are as fundamental to the Shakespearean conception of the body politic as are those of judgment and control to the moral idea, must still be made and accepted. Henry's soldiers, in spite of their pessimistic view of the military situation, accept them without reserve. For Bates the duty of a subject lies simply in loyal execution of the royal will, and the responsibility for wrong action, if wrong there be, rests beyond the simple soldier with the king: 'we know enough if we know we are the king's subjects.' Williams is more sceptical in his estimate of the king's judgment, but his scepticism, far from eating into the mind and sapping the will to action, is simply the reflection of a sturdy and independent character. It is, in other words, closer in spirit to Falstaff's unprejudiced observations upon 'honour' than to the corroding scepticism of the 'problem' plays. Replying to Henry's assertion that the cause is just with a doubtful 'that's more than we know,' he never really questions the postulate that the subject is bound to obedience. Indeed, he openly asserts that this is so. To disobey, as he puts it, 'were against all proportion of subjection'; and the emphasis is still upon the 'proportion' to be observed in the relationship between king and subject, between the directing head and the executive body, and upon the proper submission necessary to successful military effort. Henry, of course, accepts this view of his position. Indeed, the temper of the play, still strictly political and patriotic, does not permit him to do otherwise: but the manner of his acceptance, modified as it is by a consistently sombre estimate of human possibilities, is decidedly tragic in spirit.

For the arguments of his followers, though they do not lead

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Henry to question his own authority, force him to reflect deeply upon the weaknesses which even kings cannot overcome. It is in the tone of these reflections that he approaches more nearly than ever before to the spirit of later plays: 'The king is but a man as I am; the violet smells to him as it doth to me; . . . all his senses have but human conditions: his ceremonies laid by, in his wickedness he appears but a man; and though his affections are higher mounted than ours, yet when they stoop they stoop with the like wing.' There is about the argument a universality which transcends the royal situation. Men, differentiated by vain 'ceremony,' are united in their common wickedness, and the most notable feature of human behaviour is its domination by sensual weakness, its helplessness before the universal stooping of the affections.[3] In this respect, at least, the king shares the failings of his men; and just because he is so like them, just because his senses too have but human conditions,' are constantly liable to break through the guard of rigid self-control, there is something precarious and disproportionate in his absolute claim upon the allegiance of his followers. The royal isolation is further underlined by Williams when he points out the spiritual consequences of a conflict for which the king, as unquestioned head of his army, is alone responsible: 'For how can they' (soldiers) 'charitably dispose of anything when blood is their argument? Now, if these men do not die well, it will be a black matter for the king that led them to it.' These words repeat once more, but with a greater urgency, a preoccupation with the horrors of war which Henry has already expressed, even if he succeeded in shaking off responsibility for them, to the French ambassadors and to the Governor of Harfleur. They repeat them, moreover, in terms of that friction between flesh and spirit which is so prominent in the king himself. The words of Williams imply, in fact, beyond the religious sense of responsibility which derives from

[3]The reference to the violet and its smell in connection with corrupt sensuality can be paralleled by the words of Angelo:

> 'it is I
> That, lying by the violet in the sun,
> Do as the carrion does, not as the flower,
> Corrupt with virtuous season.'
>
> (*Measure for Measure*. II, ii)

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the traditional conception of Henry's character, a contrast—already familiar to us—between the Christian law of ' grace ' or ' charity ' and the ' blood '-spurred impulse to destruction that threatens it in the acts of war with the consequences of unleashed brutality. The connection between this conflict of flesh and spirit and the tendency of human societies, states and families alike, to dissolve by the questioning of ' degree ' into individual anarchy, is not established in this play as it is in the tragedies which follow. But Hamlet himself might have reflected like Henry on the precarious basis of human pretensions, and Angelo defined in similar terms the catastrophic realization of it brought about by his fatal encounter with Isabella. Had Henry once followed his line of speculation far enough to doubt the validity of his motives for action, or—on the other hand—had he given free play to the sinister impulses he dimly recognizes in himself, the resemblance would have been complete; as it is, there is only a premonition, a first indication of possibilities brought more fully to light in later plays.

For the moment, Henry counters the disturbing implications of Williams' argument by pointing out that soldiers ' purpose not their death, when they purpose their services.' His sombre view of human nature, however, impresses itself upon the king, attaches itself to his own meditations, and is profoundly echoed in his own words. Connecting war with sin, and in particular with over-riding passion, he repeats the tone of earlier statements: ' Besides, there is no king, be his cause never so spotless, if it come to the arbitrament of swords, can try it out with all unspotted soldiers: some peradventure have on them the guilt of premeditated and contrived murder; some, of beguiling virgins with the broken seals of perjury.' The result is, in part, a fresh emphasis upon meticulous self-examination as a means of conserving spiritual health—' therefore should every soldier in the wars do as every sick man in his bed, wash every mote out of his conscience '—and, in the soliloquy which brings the scene to an end, one of those outbursts of nostalgic craving for release which have appeared already in the Second Part of *Henry IV* and will be repeated with a new, more directly *physical* apprehension of existence in Hamlet's soliloquies and the Duke's incitations to Claudio in *Measure for Measure*.

> What infinite heart's ease
> Must kings neglect, that private men enjoy.

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The craving for ' heart's ease ' in this long speech is still, generally speaking, what it is in *Henry IV*: a desire to be freed from the burden of an office in which human purposes seem fatally divorced from human achievement. The development of the verse is still painstaking, leisurely in the expansion of its long periods, and a little rhetorical; but there are moments, generally traceable to characteristic touches of imagery, which anticipate the association in *Hamlet* of this familiar nostalgia with a desire to be free from the intolerable incumbrances, the ' fardels,' the ' things rank and gross in nature,' by which the flesh persistently, fatally seems to obstruct the unimpeded workings of the spirit. Greatness is a ' fiery fever ' which consumes its royal victim like a bodily disease, and the contrasted peace of the humble subject is described with a curious ambiguity of tone:

> Not all these, laid in bed majestical,
> Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave,
> Who with a body fill'd and vacant mind
> Gets him to rest, cramm'd with distressful bread.

In the association of peace with bodily fulness and vacancy of mind, in the impression, harshly and directly physical, behind ' fill'd ' and ' cramm'd,' there is a distinct suggestion of certain descriptions of satiated, idle contentment in plays as far apart as *Troilus and Cressida* and *Coriolanus*.[4] Here already such imagery represents a kind of residue standing, intractable and irreducible, in direct contrast to the king's unceasing emphasis on the need for spiritual discipline. It is no more than a suggestion, unabsorbed as yet into the main imaginative design of the play; but, tentative as it is, it does stand in a certain relationship to the clash of flesh and spirit, ' passion ' and ' grace ' which exacts continual vigilance from Henry, and which is slowly moving through these developments of imagery towards more open realization.

A similar potential cleavage, and one which is given clearer dramatic expression, can be traced in the treatment of the two sides drawn up in battle at Agincourt. Shakespeare differentiates

[4] I have indicated the importance of imagery of the same type in both these plays in earlier numbers of *Scrutiny* (June, 1937, and December, 1938).

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between the French and English forces in a way which dimly anticipates the balance held in *Troilus and Cressida* between Greeks and Trojans: though it is true that here the unfavourable estimate of the English, which is scarcely compatible with the spirit of the story, is expressed only in the words of their enemies. The English are still morally worthy of their victory, but the French account of them at least anticipates the possibility of criticism. The French, combining a touch of the insubstantial chivalry of Hector and Troilus with a more than Trojan emptiness, are, like the Trojans, defeated; the English, represented by them as gross and dull-witted, are as undeniably successful as the Greeks. In his treatment of the French nobility, Shakespeare seems to be turning a popular satirical conception to fresh purposes. The Dauphin's description of his horse (III, vii), which is typical of many French utterances, combines a certain elemental lightness with a deliberate Euphuistic hollowness of phrase: 'It is a beast for Perseus; he is pure air and fire, and the dull elements of earth and water never appear in him.' The contrast between the opposed elements is typical, but so is the reference just below to the conventional love poetry of the courts. For the Dauphin goes on to say that he once wrote in praise of his horse a sonnet beginning 'Wonder of nature,' to which Orleans retorts 'I have heard a sonnet begin so to one's mistress'; and the Dauphin, oblivious to the reversal of values involved, comments—'Then did they imitate that which I composed to my courser, for my horse is my mistress.' The world implied by such remarks is clearly, in embryo, that of the early scenes of *Troilus*: a world far less seriously treated and with much less evidence of a dominating and clearly conceived purpose, but already light, sceptical, and revealing a fundamental moral carelessness, a society which views with cynicism the graceful phrase-making of its own members. Equally significant are the slighting references of the French to the heavy wits and bodies of the English, references which already bear some similarity to Shakespeare's treatment of 'the dull, brainless Ajax' and Achilles, his rival in ponderous inaction. At one point the criticism is enforced by a comparison between the qualities and effects of wine and water:

> Can sodden water,
> A drench for sur-rein'd jades, their barley-broth,
> Decoct their cold blood to such valiant heat? (III, v)

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The difference is described here—and this is the most interesting thing about a passage which might otherwise pass for nothing more than a piece of popular satire on national humours—in terms of ' blood.' Hot blood, sensual, frivolous, and ineffective in its verbal pretension to nobility meets the cold fixity of purpose which it affects to despise, and is hopelessly defeated. Without overstressing the importance of these passages, we may hold that there are elements in this picture which Shakespeare will soon use with greater intellectual consistency and for more serious purposes. Meanwhile, the Constable contemptuously refers to the King of England and ' his fat-brain'd followers ' as empty in the head—for ' if their heads had any intellectual armour they could never wear such heavy head-pieces '—and dependent for their courage on the fact that they have left ' their wits with their wives '; but, like the Greeks in *Troilus* and more deservedly, they prevail. Shakespeare's handling of the battle carries on this conception. The French, trusting in a thin and rhetorical belief in their own aristocratic superiority, rush hastily and incompetently to their deaths; the English, deriving their spirit from their King, win the day by perseverance and self-control. Self-control, however, which is—as in Henry himself—not without a suggestion of harshness and inhumanity. Henry's righteousness does not prevent him from inflicting merciless reprisals on his prisoners, and there is something sardonic about Gower's comment that ' the king, most worthily, hath caused every soldier to cut his prisoner's throat. O 't is a gallant king ' (IV, vii). By such excellence, Shakespeare would seem to say, must wars be won.

There is, indeed, a good deal of throat-cutting in this play. The King's ruthlessness, which is a logical consequence of his efficiency, needs to be seen against the human background which Shakespeare provides for it, most noticeably in the comic scenes which turn on the behaviour of the common soldiery. There is little room in *Henry V* for the distinctive note of comedy. Shakespeare's delineation of character is as clear-cut as ever, and his dialogue abundantly if discreetly flavoured with the sense of humanity; but there is about these humorous scenes a certain desiccated flatness that contrasts sharply with the exuberance of earlier plays. We may detect in these scenes, if we will, an increasing interest in Ben Jonson's handling of ' humour ' to fit a new

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kind of moral purpose. Bardolph, Pistol, and the others, no longer enlivened by contact with Falstaff, quarrel like curs, and their jokes turn largely upon the bawdy-houses which will inevitably swallow them up when they return to England, and upon the cutting of throats. ' Men may sleep, and they may have their throats about them at that time; and some say knives have edges.' (II, ii) Nym's remark, itself dark and enigmatic, is prefaced by a sombre, fatalistic ' things must be as they may,' which modifies the comic sententiousness of the speaker and implies a certain resigned acceptance of the ordering of things. The humorous conception of the character is toned down to fit in with a spirit no longer essentially humorous; and this applies not only to Nym, but to his companions in arms. Fluellen and Gower, Williams and Bates are distinguished, not by comic vitality or by the penetration of their comments on men and events, but by their qualities of commonsense, by a tough sense of loyalty and dedication to the work in hand ; and it is by their devotion to the strictly practical virtues and by the definition of their various national idiosyncrasies that they live. This is no longer the world of *Henry IV—Part I*. Falstaff himself, out of place in such company, is remembered only in his death, serving as a kind of measure by contrast with which Shakespeare emphasizes his changing vision of humanity. His death—it is worth noting—is ascribed directly to the King, who ' has killed his heart '; and Nym, repeating that phrase of resignation which conveys so much more than he realizes of the spirit of this new world, relates Henry's treatment of him to an obscure, inherent fatality. ' The King is a good King; but it must be as it may; he passes some humours and careers.' (II. i) In a play where the touchstone of conduct is political success, and in which humanity has to accommodate itself continually to the claims of expediency, there is no place for Falstaff. Shakespeare had already recognized this and prepared for the necessary change in the ' rejection ' which had brought the previous play to a close; and now, in *Henry V*, his death affects us tragically as the last glimpse of another and less sombre world. His companions who remain, and whose life in previous plays was largely a reflection of his vitality, must now accommodate themselves to the times. They do so—and this is significant in defining Shakespeare's attitude to Henry's war—by abandoning domestic crime to follow their King

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to France. War, and its prospects of plunder, are for them no more and no less than a means of livelihood and an alternative to preying upon one another. As Bardolph puts it—'We must to France together ; why the devil should we keep knives to cut one another's throats?' (II, i)

In the comic scenes which present Henry's campaign against a background of drab reality, Shakespeare sets this sober view of human nature against the King's rhetorical incitations to patriotic feeling. The arrangement of the scenes is, as usual, not accidental. The behaviour of Nym, Bardolph and Pistol before Harfleur (III, ii) reads with double force after Henry's stress on breeding and the patriotic virtues. The general tone of the soldierly meditations is familiar enough and recalls Falstaff's observations at Shrewsbury. 'The knocks are too hot'—as Nym puts it—'and for mine own part, I have not a case of lives'; whilst the Boy's comment—'I would give all my fame for a pot of ale and safety'—makes him the inheritor, at least for a moment, of the philosophy of his former master. But the Shakespearean attitude to war in this play implies, beyond this familiar appeal to common-sense, a further element scarcely suggested in *Henry IV—Part I*, although it is in process of development in the sequel to that play. The values towards which Shakespeare is now feeling his way are tragic and essentially moral. Even in Pistol's flamboyant bravado and evident cowardice, there is a new note of reflection, a serious reference to the wastage of invaluable human lives—'Knocks come and go; God's vessels'—the phrase, for all its comic solemnity, is not unaffected by the sense of religious seriousness—'drop and die.' Striking too, though in another direction, is the repeated emphasis upon stealing in the scenes which portray the invading army. Henry's Englishmen, 'the noblest English' who are to be a copy to 'men of grosser blood,' are the same who 'will steal anything and call it purchase.' They steal, not in the spirit of the earlier Falstaff defying 'the rusty curb of old father antic the law,' but to keep body and soul together or in simple obedience to their innate cupidity; and in the intervals of stealing, there are abundant opportunities for the throat-cutting which is so great a part of the military vocation. As Macmorris reminds his fellows, 'there is throats to be cut and works to be done,' so that Henry's treatment of his prisoners in the hour of battle, far from being an isolated

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incident, simply gives a polite sanction to the common reality of war.

The presence of these elements in his army imposes certain necessities upon the King in the fulfilment of his responsibilities. Cupidity in man is balanced by uncompromising rigour in the maintenance of elementary moral law. Besides being ready to inflict suffering upon his enemies, Henry has to enforce good conduct among his own men. When Bardolph, adding sacrilege to theft, steals a pax from a French church, Henry has no hesitation in ordering him to be hanged (III, vi) ; for discipline, as the faithful and competent Fluellen observes, ' is to be used,' and the offender should die, even ' if he were my brother.' In imposing discipline upon his men, Henry has to make the sacrifices called for by his office. Once more justice requires authority to be ready to cut across human feeling ; and once more the dominating impression is one of political expediency. Even the enforcement of honesty in this play has its basis in sober calculation. Henry, in confirming the sentence passed upon the thief, leaves the last word to diplomacy: ' for when lenity and cruelty play for a kingdom, the gentler gamester is the soonest winner.' Moral principle, coming into contact with political reality, translates itself inevitably into a question of expediency ; and it is expediency, the condition of successful leadership, which is—whatever his deepest desires—the touchstone of Henry's conduct.

Perhaps we can now understand why *Henry V*, as I suggested at the opening of this essay, has been most generally popular when imperfectly understood. Its concessions to human feeling are too few, its presiding spirit too discouraging to compel enthusiasm. It ends, on every level, in a decided pessimism which somehow fails to attain the note of tragedy. Pistol, speaking the last word for the cut-throats of the play, leaves us with a gloomy and uncompromisingly realistic vision of his future which the sober common-sense of Fluellen and the other soldiers does not sufficiently lighten:

> Doth Fortune play the huswife with me now?
> News have I, that my Doll is dead i' the spital
> Of malady of France ;
> And there my rendezvous is quite cut off.
> Old do I wax ; and from my weary limbs
> Honour is cudgelled. Well, bawd I'll turn,

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> And something lean to cutpurse of quick hand.
> To England will I steal, and there I'll steal:
> And patches will I get unto these cudgell'd scars,
> And swear I got them in the Gallia wars. (V, i)

Nor is the political conclusion, which shows peace following on the English triumph, much more encouraging. Henry's wooing of Katharine, distant and consistently prosaic in tone, befits what is after all never more than a political arrangement undertaken in a spirit of sober calculation. It may have satisfied the demands of patriotic orthodoxy at Elizabeth's court ; but Shakespeare had the gift of fulfilling obligations of this kind without being deterred from his deeper purposes, and this conclusion can hardly have been meant to do more. The inspiration of *Henry V* is, if anything, critical, analytic, exploratory. As we read it, a certain coldness takes possession of us as it took possession, step by step, of the limbs of the dying Falstaff ; and we too, in finishing this balanced, sober study of political success, find ourselves in our own way ' babbling of green fields.'

D. A. TRAVERSI.

COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

POETS IN WARTIME

DEATH AT SEA, by Frederick Prokosch (*Chatto and Windus,* 6/-).
SELECTED POEMS, by Cecil Day Lewis (*The Hogarth Press,* 2/6).
POEMS IN WARTIME, by Cecil Day Lewis (*Jonathan Cape,* 2/6).
SELECTED POEMS, by William Plomer (*The Hogarth Press,* 2/6).
S.O.S. LUDLOW, by Christopher Hassall (*Jonathan Cape,* 5/-).

The anger, strain, salvation-seeking bewilderment and despair, of the past, the celebration of heroism and the comfort of a new-found social solidity in the present, are the themes, treated with very disparate degrees of dignity and seriousness, with which these poets deal: and of them all, Mr. Prokosch seems to me to be the most worthy of serious consideration.

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He is eloquent—eloquence is his most striking quality—and he has, what is nowadays so rare, a tune of his own. In method and melody he derives from T. S. Eliot, and the corpse in his sea is the corpse of Phlebas the Phoenician; but to say this is not to imply either that he is merely derivative and second hand, or that his work is as important for us as Eliot's has been. Both have an embracing vision of the plight of all humanity, of the world now and yesterday; neither attempts any short cut solution, like Day Lewis's Utopian Marxism, or Hassall's unctuous uplift; but Mr. Prokosch has no fragment of the true cross to shore against his ruins.

I feel that he is least successful when he uses images, memories, and allusions, flatly and unrelatedly—a trick he has in common with many contemporary poets. By unrelatedly, I do not mean that they have no logical or associational relationship with the poem of which they form part, or rather with the complex of attitudes out of which the poem is made, but that he fails to translate them into comprehensive references, and therefore they have not for the reader the same value as for the writer, but stick clumsily out from among images of more general validity. In Mr. Prokosch's work there are too many of these scattered tesserae, pepper-potted memories, unwelded, untransmuted, raw.

For example, in ' The Victims,' a poem which is about our failure to reconcile the instinctive with the conscious, the private with the social, in the course of which he lists visions of people who symbolise contemporary civilisation, there is this stanza:

> I hear the murmur of the consumptives in the mountain pines,
> I see the mathematicians labouring over their flawless signs,
> I see the pudgy idealists in the swimming pool, and the single
> Flicker of light on the black and dripping faces in the mines.

The lines about the consumptives, the mathematicians and the miners, are, I think, successfully evocative; but what response are we to make to line three? I suppose the idealists may be in a swimming pool because such surroundings are luxurious, and the idealists are the sort who can afford such places, where they splash

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and do nothing to help their neighbours; so that the remark is just party-line satire of the sort we have become so familiar with in recent years. Yet this may be all wrong, because the swimming pool may be a public one where the idealists pay fourpence for their dip. And why are they pudgy? Have they got out of condition because they devote their whole time to ideals and neglect the body? yet they appear at the moment to be trying to Keep Fit; and pudginess in itself seems not to repel the author unduly, since he quotes with apparent approval, in ' The Country House,' a ' great pudding-faced Frenchman.'

My objections are not merely frivolous. Mr. Prokosch, like other serious modern poets, seeking symbols for the forces frothing in an amorphous, shifting, disrupting society, is led, in his very effort to gain precision, to be imprecise and cloudy. The line is a bad line because it is vague, and can of its nature convey nothing to the reader but a mass of irrelevant associations, though no doubt for the author it snapshots a relevant mood exactly enough. The symbolic coin is fire-new from the mint, but it is current only in Mr. Prokosch's private economy. Yet, if it is his weakness to seem unaware of the amount of uncreditworthy coinage he puts into circulation, at least he knows the problems which must beset anyone who writes poetry to-day; in much of his work he solves them, for he is not one of those who are content to write something like

> The capstan lathe setter homeward plods his weary way,

and to leave it at that.

Here are two passages from *Death at Sea* which show I think its author's best vein. First, from ' The Perfectionists: '

> Nothing they saw or suffered was enough to cure mankind
> Of the platitudes of the deaf or the flights of fancy of the blind
> Which grow for ever wilder on the clattering planet: more
> And more and more as they strove to see more clearly they slowly moved away
> From the simple speechless unexplainable ardours of each day,
> The sparkling stream of marvels which even the dullest senses pour

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Across our little afternoon—love, music, hurricane
Enter and rush like ghosts through that old cave the human brain
And to what end? We stumble, fumble, sneeze and snore,
Knowing that even the present is lost and the past not ever sure,
Struggling to keep rich the past and yet the present pure,
We fall and break our hearts in the darkness of all that we endure

and this, the first stanza of the opening poem:

Sunburned Ulysses, when he leaned over the water
And heard through the lapping of the waves
That calculating music, heard more than the noise of wind or the noise of water:
As he strained his ears he heard the monotonous profound
Music of lost mariners moving landward through the water,
He heard, rising from graves of sand, sea-pitted and sea pillared graves,
The sobbing and interminable voices of the drowned.

If you agree that this is poetry, then you will find this volume worth buying.

The New Hogarth Library selection of Mr. Day Lewis's verse is sensible, adequately representative, and justly gives most space to his personal and purely lyric work; for the near-communist adjurations, with their näive optimism

(I know a fairer land,
Whose furrows are all fire . . .
Shining for all to share)

were always jejune, and sound very faded now. In his own phrase, they were ' a green illusion in the sky, born of our desert years.'

The new volume, *Poems in Wartime*, adds little to his stature: ' autres thèmes '—for the poet has joined the Home Guard—but not ' autres cadences.' Inland within a hollow vale he stands, and writes the same kind of banal shapeless verse about this more orthodoxly patriotic activity, as he did when he bored from within, ' working underground like a mole.'

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> Last night a Stand-To was ordered. Thirty men of us here
> Came out to guard the star-lit village—my men who wear
> Unwitting the seasons beauty, the received truth of the spade—
> Roadmen, farm labourers, mason, turned to another trade.

You notice the Mr. Day Lewis has the right ideas about the good life and agriculture: I would not dispute the truth of the attitude here adumbrated, only deplore the dull commonplaceness of the lines, which reinforce a feeling I have had for some time, that this ' received truth ' is in danger of degenerating into the sort of thing classified by Flaubert as an *idée reçue*. It is interesting to see, after all the complaints about the severance of the poet from the community, of how little benefit a feeling of communal solidity has been to this particular poet. His verses about ' Fred and Charl and Stan ' are merely embarrassing, and the concluding lines of another Home Guard poem,

> for both of us, hope
> Means harvest from small beginnings, who this night
> While the moon sorts out into shadow and shape our valley,
> A farmer and a poet, are keeping watch

are almost smugly complacent. Mr. Day Lewis has hauled down the red flag; he is not so sure of the shape of things to come as he was:

> Narrowing days have darkened the vistas that hurt my eyes,

but he still has an ensign, torn but flying, however insecurely fastened:

> But pinned to the heart of darkness a tattered fire-flag flies.

I cannot help preferring the anarchic and gloomy Jolly Roger, the authentic Skull and Crossbones, under which Mr. Prokosch sails.

Yet one cannot deny Mr. Day Lewis talent and sincerity, and charm. There are in the *Poems in Wartime* two elegant and delightful little bits of imitation Old Irish, the Jig, and the Hornpipe; in the Selections, the love poems bear re-reading better than any-

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thing else; and the chorus from *Noah and the Waters* is worth putting beside the best of Auden in this genre, though it is perhaps a relevant criticism of the group to which they both belong (should I now use the past tense?) that it would be difficult to say from internal evidence which of them wrote it.

Mr. Plomer's straight verse is not very interesting, for none of it betrays the imagination of sensibility that is apparent in one or two of his short stories. He attempts also pseudo-ballads made to the Auden formula, which are amusing in a magaziny way, but hardly worth reprinting. They depend for their success on their sleek, approval-seeking, aren't I clever tone, and their capacity to arouse cultured superiority-feelings in their readers: they lack the true vitality of the genuine ballad, which works on the simple as well as the complex. There was, some time ago, a popular song about funerals and undertakers, three lines of which ran, as far as I remember, like this:

> Look at their top-hats—
> Polished with Guinness!
> Ain't it grand
> To be bloomin' well dead?

Mr. Plomer hasn't produced anything to come within miles of that ' Polished with Guinness! '

S.O.S. *Ludlow* is a long narrative about a torpedoing. The facts were supplied in ' a young subaltern's letter to his mother,' Mr. Hassall has clothed those facts in words, and rugged, not unseaworthy metre. I deliberately put the two things separately, because it seems to me that Mr. Hassall though not without ability —he is, as they say, seldom at a loss for words—seems to me essentially a literary writer; one who applies his style, or rather a *mélange* of other people's styles, to his material; an artisan, not a creator. In this poem he appears to have adapted his metrical scheme from Mr. Day Lewis's ' Sing we the two lieutenants, Parer and M'Intosh,' while cocking an eye perhaps at the *Testament of Beauty*, and got his ' special effects,' as they call them on the screen, from Hopkins. There is no doubt that he knows what is considered to be what in the literary world to-day. Indeed his whole poem is really nothing but an enormous, inflated, vulgarised variation on *The Wreck of the Deutschland*. Beneath the dexterous

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manipulations of story and verse there lie nothing but the dullest of emotional *clichés*. He attempts to work up the dignity of his theme, where he might well have let it speak for itself, and succeeds only in being ponderous and precious by turns. And when he comes, with what elephantine inevitability, to justifying the ways of God to man, this is how he writes:

> Here's the clarion purpose of our waking—
> That Life, hard pressed and losing ground, and looking
> back to the ape
> To start another evolutionary hare on lines
> More humble than the last, threatened with unexpected
> wreck,
> Can ill afford the dowsing of one spark, so it dispute,
> If only for the radius of an inch, the mindless Night;
> For struggle is our element, endurance our tough shield,
> And the divinity within our dense and bungling nature
> Our cause and captain. Planes of sprit hushed beyond all
> sound
> Will taste the sulphur of our battle, *etc., etc.*

Mr. Hassall doesn't often produce anything quite equal to that ape going in for greyhound racing in a small way, but this sort of bogus philosophy is his normal stock in trade.

The other poems deal with air raids:

> Now our barrage yells,
> The heavies lay-in long-distance uppercuts,
> Boxing the enemy with iron gloves
> To knock out their contents

and whimsy:

> 'The Old Oxford Road!' somebody
> Mused aloud. Our scalps needled
> As though we had blundered a fairy circle.

I think Mr. Hassall quite a good tip for the Laureateship, when it next becomes vacant: he's modern, if you see what I mean, without being vulgar.

T. R. BARNES.

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A BOOK ON YEATS

THE POETRY OF W. B. YEATS, by Louis MacNeice (Oxford, 8/6).

I had better state right away that this seems to me a painstaking and conscientious book: because I must immediately add a qualifying clause, namely that if *Modern Poetry* was Mr. MacNeice's primer for provincial schoolmasters the new book on Yeats might be described as his undergraduate thesis. A brief review of the contents will indicate clearly enough what I mean. We begin with an introductory chapter in which Mr. MacNeice adjudicates between the various fashionable tags on poetics. What is poetry about? he asks, is it about anything? what do we mean by Realism? what's the significance of Subject Matter, Personality, Impersonality? is poetry utilitarian or mystical? what do we mean by ' escape ' or by ' style '? After this there are chapters on Yeat's sources (Aestheticism and the Irish National Movement), on the development of his preoccupations and activities, and comparisons of Yeats with Rilke, D. H. Lawrence, A. E. Housman, Hopkins, T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, William Blake, James Joyce . . . old Uncle Tom Cobley and all except Franz Kafka. There is a chapter (very cosmic) on the significance of Crazy Jane, and the whole book, like the undergraduate thesis, is exhibitionistic, and painfully thorough.

Of course it makes no fresh contribution to poetics, and it tells us nothing essential about Yeats's background that Yeats himself hasn't told us in his prose-writings. But very few books can be said to make a contribution to knowledge or experience, and there is this much to be said for Mr. MacNeice's, that it seems to me possible (since Mr. MacNeice has got as far as the circulating libraries) that his book might set some people thinking about poetry who wouldn't otherwise think about it at all. It has its uses: but is hardly about the poetry of W. B. Yeats. Maybe somewhere in the *melée* Mr. MacNeice does attempt to define the essence of the Yeatsian idiom if only one were able to see the wood for the trees; or maybe his belief that the critic is ' impotent to convey the thinghood of a poem ' precludes critical analysis altogether. In either case his book fails because it hasn't the core of a stable attitude, and it has

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no core because it has no criticism.

For instance, the blurb tells us that Mr. MacNeice rediscovers the early poems and it's true that he does point out, as others have pointed out before him, that all Yeats's emendations weren't unqualified improvement. But is it helpful to offer, as explanation, the fact that there are various ' types ' of poetry and leave it at that? Wouldn't a little analysis of a particular poem—say one of the curlew poems, or *The Folly of being Comforted*—have shown how, through that unique supple management of speech and metrical stress, it is Yeats's personality that makes the poem so much *more* than a type, gives a lithe animation to the pale hands and dim hair, so that one can say that although Yeats wrote poems deeper and more complex as he grew older he never wrote anything *better* in the sense of being more clearly realized? Wouldn't an attempt to define the Yeatsian personality by way of relevant analysis have been worth all Mr. MacNiece's tracing of sources, his Here-Is-An-Example-Of-The-Use-Of-Rhetoric, his Yeats-is-a-master-of-the-short-lined-poem-with-three-or-four-stresses-to-a-line, his detailed discussion of the social and cultural background? Wouldn't it even have thrown light on the background itself, put it into perspective, revealed eighteenth-century aristocratic Dublin, which Mr. MacNeice refers to *en passant*, as the mainspring, poetically speaking, of Yeats's nationalism? Research after all must be relevant; only the verse can show what is relevant, what isn't.

A similar defect vitiates Mr. MacNeice's consideration of Yeats's ' development.' Increased range of subject-matter, realism, ritual and so on are mere labels and I cannot believe that literary criticism is utterly helpless without them. Surely analysis of a few representative later poems would have indicated that they differ from the early successes in this, that whereas the early poems are pitched in one emotional key, unique and passionate though it may be, the later ones manifest a plasticity of feeling, a reference to ' other modes of experience that are possible,' which finds idiomatic expression in the more angular and varied movement, in that element of tough metaphysical or Jonsonian wit that F. R. Leavis referred to years ago (' The entire combustible world in one small room '), and that Mr. MacNeice, in so thorough a manual, barely mentions. If Mr. MacNeice had shown us the quality of Yeats's maturity working through the texture of particular poems, instead of merely telling us

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that it does; if he had grouped the miscellaneous information around these key-points; then he would have written a book that would have done more than the most abstruse discussion of the relative sincerity of Yeats's ideas to prove that Yeats the poet must have had a powerful mind as well as a sensitive, must have been more than a daft old man with some crazy notions, and a snob to boot.

As it is, Mr. MacNeice makes his points ineffectively because more or less at hazard: he has some pretty bricks but his house crumbles for want of concrete foundation. In writing of Yeats's prose he remarks that the connection between poetry and prose is intimate, a suggestion which offers an approach to the differences between the early and the late manner, but then makes no attempt at demonstration; and with the discipline of a little analysis I doubt if Mr. MacNeice could find evidence to endorse his vague appeal, with reference to the last poems, to the prophetic note of Blake. Everywhere there is confusion over particularities. Mr. MacNeice can make some very sensible general remarks about Housman (' the English Romantic masochistically practising heroics in the last ditch ') and can appear to imply, in commenting on the ' varnish ' of his form, a value judgment through discussion of technique: on the other hand he can, in another passage, donnishly remark that ' A. E. Housman uses his tripping measures to express the profoundest pessimism '—as though the vulgar lilt weren't a comment on the pessimism's profundity. Perhaps it suffices to say that, for all its ponderous tone and its weighty argumentativeness, this is, in the last resort, not a bad, but a superficial book.

W.H.M.

CHRISTIAN DISCRIMINATION, by Brother George Every, S.S.M. (Christian News-Letter Books, 1/6).

Ill chance leaves us without a review of this book, which has a direct relevance to what may be called the *Scrutiny* ' line,' and will be found very interesting.

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PROUST

INTRODUCTION TO PROUST, by Derrick Leon (*Kegan Paul*, 12/6).

This book is ten years too late. In 1930 there might still have been a place for an introduction to Proust even at this level, but since the publication of Mr. Edmund Wilson's valuable essay in *Axel's Castle* there is none. A good deal of work has been done on Proust since his death and though little of it is first class, it cannot all be relegated to an unscholarly bibliography at the end of a book. There are also a number of facts that have to be taken into account by anybody writing about Proust. It is a fact, for example, that most of us no longer take the same pleasure in his novel that we once did; and the critic has to decide whether this is due to the same sort of snobbishness which has caused the temporary eclipse of Lawrence or whether it points to a very serious limitation in Proust's art. In 1920 Jacques Rivière, who was the finest French critic of his generation, wrote an essay on ' Marcel Proust et la Tradition Classique ' in which he argued that Proust's insight and his use of the French language made him the direct descendant of the great masters of the seventeenth century. Mr. Wilson, on the other hand, declares roundly that Proust was ' the first important novelist to apply the principles of Symbolism to fiction.' It seems to me that the truth lies somewhere between these two opinions which are not as irreconcilable as they first appear. The French attach great importance to what they call a writer's *révélation psychologique* and there are many pages of psychological analysis in Proust's work which remind us strongly of the seventeenth-century moralists; but his prose also reveals both the good and bad influence of Symbolism. The work of the writers of this movement undoubtedly contains a good many conceits, a good many images which are mere *jeux de mots;* but it did extend the resources of language and the extraordinary account of Swann's evening at Madame de Saint-Euverte's —particularly the description of the guests with their monocles— where this influence is most marked, is something new in European fiction.

The most determined attack on Proust has come, as one might expect, from the Left. According to their view he is the laureate of a dying society, the apologist of an aristocracy which has retained

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its privileges while abandoning the functions that once made it a useful part of the community. This view deserves consideration, but it needs to be stated in specifically literary terms and examined in close relation to the text of Proust's novel.

There are pages in Proust which look at first as though they might have come straight from Saint-Simon, the master with whom he has been most often compared:

> 'Ayant passé d'une débauche presque infantile à la continence absolue datant du jour où il avait pensé au quai d'Orsay et voulu faire une grande carrière (he writes of the disreputable diplomat, M. de Vaugoubert), il avait l'air d'une bête en cage, jetant dans tous les sens des regards qui exprimaient la peur, l'appétence et la stupidité.'

Thirty pages later the same criticism is repeated in slightly different terms:

> 'La carrière diplomatique avait eu sur sa vie l'effet d'une entrée dans les ordres. Combinée avec l'assiduité à l'Ecole des Sciences Politiques, elle l'avait voué depuis ses vingt ans à la chasteté du chrétien.'

What might pass in the first passage for a stroke of Saint-Simonian irony now appears as a note of frustration, as though the writer were attempting to solve a personal problem by caricaturing it in the person of another. This suspicion is strengthened by the crude description (at the same party) of the narrator's enthusiastic acceptance of a friend's invitation to visit—at some future unspecified date—a particularly smart brothel.

It is this note of frustration that provides a clue to the later volumes of *A la recherche du temps perdu*. It is characteristic of Mr. Leon's innocence as a critic that he can describe Albertine as

> 'Attractive, charming and intelligent, we see her subtly transformed from the boisterous hoyden of the Balbec promenade to the smart, alluring, cultivated and companionable young woman into which she blossoms as Marcel's mistress.'

He finds her, it is true, 'elusive' and 'enigmatic,' but it does not occur to him that this may be due to some flaw in Proust's art and he has apparently never heard of the theory that she was a

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young man. This is an important point. Unless it is realised that Proust was profoundly homosexual the whole of *Sodome et Gomorrhe* is meaningless. There is, in the later volumes of the novel, a universal drift towards the cities of the plain and its full horror can only be appreciated when the implications of the story of Albertine's imprisonment are grasped. Consider the following extracts from the beginning of *La prisonnière:*

> ' . . . Albertine, que d'ailleurs je ne trouvais plus guère jolie et avec laquelle je m'ennuyais, que j'avais la sensation nette de ne pas aimer . . .'
>
> ' Son charme un peu incommode était ainsi d'être à la maison moins comme une jeune fille, que comme une bête domestique qui entre dans une pièce, qui en sort, qui se trouve partout où on ne s'y attend pas . . .'
>
> ' Je n'aimais plus Albertine '
>
> ' Albertine s'était étonnamment développée, ce qui m'était entièrement égal . . .'

When we ask why he was so determined to keep prisoner a woman whom he neither loved nor found attractive, this is the answer:

> ' J'avais pu séparer Albertine de ses complices et, par là, exorciser mes hallucinations . . .'

The whole story of this enforced detention of the woman is a curious and sinister myth of a crumbling society trying desperately and violently to convince itself of its own normality, to stop its drift towards perversion and collapse. The writer invents a woman whose vices are also his own; he congratulates himself on his forcible prevention of practices that he envies and, at the same time, by changing the object of desire into a woman tries to conceal the roots of the evil from himself. Nor should we miss the significance of the consultations with the Duchesse de Guermantes over Albertine's clothes. It is not the adornment of the bride or the mistress, but a sort of fetichism—a solemn incensing of a twofold being who is the symbol of normality and perversity.

The figure of M. de Charlus has been praised as a great comic creation. There is, indeed, a savage farce about this account of the

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dissolution of the middle aged homosexual; but when we look into it, we find that Proust's irony is by no means disinterested. He envies Morel who under cover of an engagement to a pleasant and very normal young woman carries on his appalling intrigue with Charlus—does in fact what Proust would like to do.

This diagnosis leads to the conclusion that Proust is not the great social critic that he is sometimes said to be. He is too deeply involved to possess the necessary critical detachment, too submerged in a world of subjective fantasy to have any clear perception of positive values. When we compare Saint-Simon's summing up at the close of the *Mémoires:*

> ' . . . comme au temps où j'ai écrit, surtout vers la fin, tout tournait à la décadence, à la confusion, au chaos, qui depuis n'a fait que croître, et que ces Mémoires ne respirent qu'ordre, règle, vérité, principes certains, et montrent à découvert tout ce qui y est contraire, qui règnent de plus en plus avec le plus ignorant, mais le plus entier empire, la convulsion doit donc être générale contre ce miroir de vérité.'

with:

> ' Mais, réveillant les sentiments d'attente jadis éprouvés à propos d'autres jeunes filles, surtout de Gilberte, quand elle tardait à venir, la privation possible d'un simple plaisir physique me causait une cruelle souffrance morale.'

—we notice a striking difference in the use of words. In Saint-Simon the words *décadence, confusion, règle, vérité, principes certains* have a precise meaning and the phrase *miroir de vérité* represents a positive standard by which the evils of the time are measured. There is nothing of the sort in Proust. The linking of *plaisir physique* with *souffrance morale* reveals a strange confusion of values, a moral blindness which accounts for many of the shortcomings of his art, for it is clear that the word *morale* is used simply to indicate a peculiarly intense sense of physical privation. Saint-Simon's appeal to the *miroir de vérité* is answered in another place by Proust's assertion that

> ' . . . la vérité change tellement pour nous, que les autres ont peine à s'y reconnaître.'

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For Proust 'truth' meant psychological truth which of its very nature is changing and inconstant. This provides a clue to his greatness. His work—particularly the early volumes dealing with his childhood's experience before he had become aware of his own sexual inversion—does reveal human nature to itself in a new way: it does mark an extension of sensibility which alters the potentialities of the novel; but he has no means of measuring or criticising the value of his findings. Mr. Wilson compares the tone of his supposed denunciation of homosexuality to that of the Old Testament prophets and puts it down to Proust's Jewish blood. I find it difficult, for reasons that I have already given, to believe in the existence of Proust the moralist. There is a certain repugnance to homosexuality, but this springs from a primitive fear, a taboo against something unnatural. In other words, its source is instinctive and largely emotional. When we compare this attitude with the strict ethical orthodoxy of the close of Baudelaire's *Femmes damnées*, where the moral attitude is completely fused in the poetic image, we realise why Baudelaire's poetry has a maturity, a finality, for which we shall look in vain in Proust.

MARTIN TURNELL.

ESSAYS ON CULTURE AND CIVILISATION

TOPICS: TEN ESSAYS by Walter Shewring (Hague and Gill, 5/-).

This is a business-like little book, and I shall try to imitate its conciseness, and shall deal with the essays in ascending order of importance. In the first five papers, which are slight, I shall only mention the translation of an excellent folk-tale by Nicolas of Damascus, some interesting extracts from a collection of Catholic hymns, given in a review of the collection, and the judgment in the same paper that 'some Evangelical hymns of Cowper, Newton and the Wesleys are among the best verse of their century.'

Art, Work and Distributism, the title of the next essay indicates the ground covered by the sociological part of the book. I have a number of quarrels with this part, and I think the superiority of the later essays on education is due to their getting down more to brass tacks. The more general essays leave one in doubt how much Mr. Shewring is attempting to show. First of all my

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quarrel about art. Mr. Shewring puts well points that are familiar in the writings of Eric Gill and W. R. Lethaby, and that command agreement on the whole if they are intended as descriptions of the place of art in a healthy society. What is less satisfactory is the confusion of this with the question, what is art? It almost seems to be suggested that this is a pseudo-question, and the word ' aesthetic ' is used in a rather contemptuous way. Mr. Shewring apparently has a general theory of art, but unfortunately it is, I believe, a false one. It is essentially a Greek one and springs from a failure to recognize the individuality of works of art (I shall be dogmatic: my indebtedness to Professor Collingwood's *Principles of Art* and Mr. M. B. Foster's *Political Philosophies of Plato and Hegel* will be obvious). ' If the philosopher spoke of art, he generally chose for illustration the art of the weaver or cobbler or ship-builder rather than the poet's or painter's or musician's.' The reference is to the Greek conception of techne or craft, and the application of it to art ignores the fact that whereas the essence of a work of craft is contained in the performance of its function (cf. the instructive discussion in Plato's *Cratylus*, 389) the essence of the *Oresteia* is to be the particular dramatic work it is. The question of its place in the life of society is quite a different one: its nature as a work of art does not depend on its having this or that social function. [Plato's theory of art, in so far as he has one, presumably comes out in his treatment of poetry, which he treats not as a techne, but as an irrational product (cf. *Apology*, 22). If this is so, the only important thing about it is its moral effect]. I have taken an example of ' high ' art because the principle is most easily seen there. I agree that it is important not to draw a sharp line between fine art and everyday art, but a theory of art is more obviously inadequate if it fails to cover the greatest works than if it is a little embarrassed to tell just where art stops at the lower end of the scale. This ambiguity between essence and function crops up at various places, *e.g.*, in the remark that many pictures and statues ' were never meant for museums at all nor yet for connoisseurs' collections; on the contrary they were meant for churches and temples where they served as support for contemplation to every worshipper.' Yes, and it is obvious that the removal from the proper setting is likely to make it less easy to apprehend them as works of art. But even in that setting ' being a support for con-

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templation ' is different from ' being a work of art.' Many works of art are also useful (buildings for instance), and all are useful in the wider sense of contributing to the total of human experience, but none the less ' every thing is what it is, and not another thing.' So much for art: perhaps I have read too much into Mr. Shewring's brief treatment, but I think it important to maintain the autonomy of art and to protest against the implication that aesthetic theories of a more or less Crocean type are mere dilettantisms.

On distributism Mr. Shewring is even more brief and I should like him to come down to earth a bit more. What is involved in proposing distributism as a policy? What action here and now? Most of us will accept the insistence on the basic human need for responsible work as a guiding principle in any social reform. But there are evidently various demands being made at once and they ought to be sorted out. A reasonable degree of equality, and responsibility in work, might be secured equally by some form of democratic socialism. Writers like Tawney have as much respect for traditional values as Mr. Shewring, and, I should say, a greater sense of actuality (even if the prospects of democratic socialism are not very bright at the moment). The demand for a strict control and probably a reduction of machine production is distinguishable from the more general position, and may be due to an over-hasty generalization from the past history of industrialism. A decentralised industrialism does not seem out of the question—compare the interesting remarks of an American agrarian: ' With the age of electricity, with the increasing subtlety and adaptability of the machine, the modern world is beginning to wonder whether Jefferson's idea of industrialism cannot be applied, whether in many cases the giant machines and the giant towns cannot be decentralized for the sake of social and political benefits as well as benefits in efficiency ' (Agar: *Pursuit of Happiness*, p. 50). The defect of Jefferson's ideas was, Mr. Agar suggests, that they were ' a century or more ahead of time.' Professor Hogben has written in the same vein.

Perhaps I have ignored the main charge against the machine, that it destroys responsibility in work, but I don't see the point of discussing the problem in those terms. Drudgery, sub-human activity, is to be prevented whether it involves the manipulation of machines or not, and we have to judge each machine on its merits.

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The real problem is, I believe, a sort of vicious spiral: those engaged in irresponsible machine production need to be provided in their leisure with ' canned ' food for body and mind, which is produced by people who in their turn require similar food—hence a progressive decline in responsible living. But in remedying this we should need to be sure we were not just substituting drudgery that does not create leisure for drudgery that does.

Now for what I want to recommend very heartily: the two essays on education (introduced by a more general one on *Education in an Abnormal Society*). Mr. Shewring here accepts the general framework of ' book-learning ' and proposes means of using books to advantage, and it is here that the direct and forceful character of his mind is most apparent. The first of the two essays deals with literary studies in general and the second with the classics. Both are full of common sense and the marginal *obiter dicta* usually commend themselves as convincing, *e.g.*, on the English novelists (p. 83). The essay on *Classics at the Universities* does a remarkable amount of work in a short space. It would be impossible to summarize it, but it deals with the literary insensitivity of classical scholars, the uses of composition in Greek and Latin, the conventional placing of Greek prose writers (' Isocrates and Demosthenes are not only minor writers but false writers. Their notions are trivial, their quarrels are parochial, but they offer them as a message to the world, concealing bankruptcy with inflation. They are types of the pretentious bad artist—" all dressed up and nowhere to go " '), Greek-view-of-life-ism, and ' the fiction of the Greek " philosophic mind " '. One more quotation, on the custom of setting bad English for translation: ' when the student has worked through a hundred pieces of Burke, Fox, Macaulay, Disraeli, Gladstone and our living leaders, there is no vice of language he should not have learnt to hate. False logic, bad grammar, dead metaphor, elegant variations bombast, mere fatuity—they are all there, in a kind of *Goth's Progress*.' These two essays are examples of the best type of debunking, for they are based on firm positive standards.

I have given most of my space to objections chiefly because where I agree Mr. Shewring has left little to add. Every sentence in the book conveys its meaning with elegance and economy.

J. C. MAXWELL.

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MUSICAL CONDITIONS IN THE XVIIIth CENTURY

THE ORCHESTRA IN THE XVIIIth CENTURY, by Adam Carse (Heffer, Cambridge, 1940, 10/6, 176 pp.).

This is a book mainly for specialists, who will find it on the whole an admirably scholarly performance and refer to it often for a variety of information that may be difficult to come by unless one lives at a stone's throw of the British Museum or some other representative library. Only once does Mr. Carse fail in his laudable efforts to save the research worker time, and that is where he discusses (p. 142) the question of the embellishments which instrumental soloists, like singers, used to foist on sustained melodies written down in plain notes by eighteenth-century composers. 'For examples of how this was done,' he says, 'the reader is referred to the old theoretical works.' But that is exactly what the reader does not want, especially when he has been spoilt by Mr. Carse through the preceding hundred and forty pages containing an almost endless array of facts not previously gathered together by any English writer, and some not dealt with anywhere else.

The general reader will not have so much reason to be grateful: the book will no doubt strike him as rather laborious and repetitive, and he may well ask musicians whether they really think all the information given sufficiently important to justify quite so much effort in wading through it. The answer is likely to be, in the first place, that there is no need to wade, but that one may merely dip; and, in the second, that while the third chapter contains a vast accumulation of details about instrumental performers in various eighteenth-century orchestras all over Europe which only clutter up Mr. Carse's pages, almost everywhere else the book gives particulars that may be of the greatest assistance to the student and the scholar at any moment. If they too are slightly bored, it will be mainly because it is always tiresome to have to be conscious of gratitude.

Points of interest arising from Mr. Carse's investigations could be cited almost endlessly. It must suffice to draw attention to a few which throw light on eighteenth-century music that is still performed to-day by explaining the musical conditions of their time, when

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they were modern works The most striking fact mentioned in the introductory chapter, indeed, is that all music performed in the eighteenth century was modern. Nobody was interested in the past history of the art to the point of elucidating it by means of performance, and even historians were incredibly patronising to its products. (Burney would think it a handsome tribute to the Elizabethan madrigals to say that they were ' not devoid of a certain elegance ' : his attitude towards them was in fact very much like that assumed by a present-day jazz band towards things like ' A bicycle for two,' and it is curious to note that this exclusive concern with new music has perpetuated itself only among performers of light music.) Another general fact that emerges from this first chapter is that composers of the time were all executive musicians—or at any rate Mr. Carse says ' all ' without qualification, though many were that only because there was no way of getting their own works performed except by taking part in them.

The second chapter, on the ' Constitution and Strength of Orchestras,' contains useful detailed tabulations of the orchestras at various important European musical centres. For this we are indebted chiefly to the mania for statistics that has characterized German writers on music ever since the eighteenth century, though one or two Frenchmen as well as Burney among contemporaries and Charles Sanford Terry in modern times have something to contribute to it. The peculiar scoring of this or that well-known work is sometimes explained by these tables, if it is known to have been written for a particular band, and they are useful in many other ways; but it is difficult to see any point in Mr. Carse's deductions from an average drawn from the number of musicians employed here, there and everywhere: this is like exclaiming in surprise that three octogenarians number 240 years between them, which would be equally true of three people aged 97, 98 and 45. The tables are not always conclusive, for they contain many question marks in the columns assigned to certain instruments. There is one for violas in the last of the Vienna court orchestra of 1782, for instance, and we know that the scores of the dances written by Mozart for the court ball never contain viola parts; but they use various freak instruments not listed in Mr. Carse's source (Forkel's ' Musikalischer Almanach '), and it is quite possible that it was the custom for violas at such functions to play the bass part an octave

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higher than the cellos, a convention that would have absolved the composer from including them in the score. However, as Mozart had never at any time, even before his Vienna period, written for violas in his orchestral dances, it is more likely that it was the fashion not to use them for that purpose. All of which leaves us in the dark, and Mr. Carse's question mark may legitimately stand.

Here and there one is pulled up. Who is ' Her Majesty ' whom Mr. Carse, quoting from Burney, mentions as figuring at the court of the celibate Frederick the Great? A ' Pantaleonist ' is not an instrument, as the fourth footnote on p. 49 seems to suggest, but a player on the ' Pantaleon.' In the second footnote on p. 132: ' In many of the old symphonies *all* the wind parts were *ad lib* . . .,' Mozart's middle-period piano Concertos, K. 413-15 and 449, might have been usefully mentioned as similar cases. On p. 93, where Mr. Carse says that in continuo playing the keyboard director was responsible for setting the tempo, he lets slip the remark that this was done, among other things, ' by means of strongly emphasized accents,' which of course it was quite impossible to produce on the harpsichord.

The chapter in which this occurs, entitled ' Direction,' is however particularly interesting, though rather encumbered with repetitions, and the following, on ' Score and Parts,' is even more instructive. We learn, for instance, that conducting by time-beating, as distinct from musical direction by a continuo player or a violin leader, is an older custom than we gather from the history of instrumental music, having established itself much earlier in choral performance. We are amused to find that in the eighteenth-century ' L'Opéra de Paris est le seul Theâtre de l'Europe où l'on batte le mesure sans la suivre ' (Rousseau), very much as it is to-day, unless the conductor is docile enough to do anything the singers like. We find that the habit of conducting from the keyboard persisted much longer than the practice of playing filling-in parts from figured basses required, and are asked to imagine the horror of a pianoforte helping the singers round dangerous corners in a Mozart opera. We hear that oboes often played in unison with violins and bassoons with cellos even when the score indicated nothing of the sort and that bass parts, often written for the benefit of continuo players with a good left-hand technique, had to be simplified by the double basses.

The dominant impression left by the book is that composers

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did not write down nearly all they wanted, either as regards notes or dynamic signs and tempo directions, and that they were by no means strict in requiring particular instruments to play particular parts. The Mannheim School, too, we know to have been especially free in the matter of fluctuations of pace, and it is a pity Mr. Carse does not tell us how these were (a) determined by the composer and (b) enforced by the conductor. The problem was often simplified by the fact that these were one and the same person, and we guess that the Mannheimers rehearsed exceptionally well. But it would have been useful to be told by Mr. Carse, who had such a wealth of instruction up his sleeve that he might as well have shaken it all out. Even as it is, however, that sleeve resembles a cornucopia generously filled and turned upside down with reckless prodigality.

ERIC BLOM.

SCIENCE IN WAR

SCIENCE IN WAR, Penguin Special.

'The most efficient utilisation of science in time of emergency necessitates in time of peace a much wider application of science to all productive forces and social services.'[1]

The harmonious working of science in society has recently become a matter for conscious concern to a number of people, whilst the general ignorance of its ultimate relationship to all of us is, if possible, an even more serious matter. It is a sad commentary that the probability, and then the onset, of war should have been necessary to give these concerns more attention in the scientific world. The present Penguin Special is an attempt to bring the subject to the attention of a larger public.

After a review of some of the results of past research, the authors (twenty-five anonymous scientists) proceed to consider the present position. Although a few aspects show reasonable achievement, the results in most fields are sadly inadequate in war as in

[1]From a resolution of the Association of Scientific Workers at their Council Meeting, November, 1938.

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peace. The essence of the authors' thesis is that only by the application of scientific principles in all aspects of the war (from propaganda to the construction of air-raid shelters) can success be expected. In particular the chaotic approach to the problems of food and agriculture are discussed—the general treatment of health and of wounds—the impractical approach to camouflage (for which there now seems to be some hope of improvement)—the design of buildings in wartime in relation both to camouflage and to their specific uses (as hospitals, etc.)—and more traditionally military matters such as anti-tank methods and the organisation of industry for defence and offence. There is no need here to go into detail, since for once the importance and cheapness of the book enable one to say with sincerity that it should be bought and read as widely as possible.

For all the lessons of 1914-18 (and all the uses which the Nazis have made of them), the use of scientific methods for even the most immediate results is only dimly realised, whilst the need for integration of the different aspects of life in the midst of war seems to be quite beyond the understanding in some quarters. Such difficulties are put down to the worship of tradition, to the almost complete ignorance of science amongst some and the distrust of its effects in others, to the vague ignorance of the general public and the usual restriction of scientists to a merely advisory position.

The last two are of great importance, and a large share of the blame rests on the shoulders of the scientists themselves. 'Many scientists have grown to accept the position, and find it difficult to conceive of any other. They are perfectly willing to answer any question, if asked, and feel their responsibility begins and ends there.' The possibility of an association between science and (any but the most conservative) politics is anathema to them. So common in this attitude in some, that one cannot avoid the feeling that such a negative conception of their place in life may be connected, consciously or unconsciously, with a desire to evade social responsibility. The responsibility for making known the social possibilities of science is no less than that of making use of them. It is an unfortunate commentary on society that less success should have been achieved in publicising the sciences of life than the physical ones; particularly when we find that greater popularity (as judged by sales) is attained by, for example the works of Eddington and

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Jeans.[2] The responsibility of scientists here is urgent. The very lack of such a sense of responsibility, here as elsewhere in life, is a serious matter for the sociologist as well as others, to consider.

In addition to a few errors of detail, which have probably crept in the text as the result of high speed preparation, there are one or two points which deserve further attention. 'Science . . . is something which does not stand outside the ordinary ways of acting and thinking. It is simply the most orderly expression of those ways.' Indeed, it is, and in so far as we are at war, the scientific will be the most orderly way of making war. Yet to say that 'there is therefore a greater need for science in the present situation than there ever has been in the quiet days of the past' may betray at the best a careless attitude towards problems of social development (*cf.* the quotation at the head of this review from the Association of Scientific Workers in Council, November, 1938). It may also betray a not uncommon scientific failing to appreciate fully the possible ends of life. There is further evidence of this in the section on *Science, Morale and Propaganda*. 'However much we may dislike the element of snooping in studying public opinion, *or the element of duping in propaganda*, these things cannot be avoided . . . once we have gone to war.' (my italics). Compare with this the words of President Roosevelt (quoted in an A.S.W. editorial) 'A dictatorship may command the full strength of a regimented nation, but the united strength of a democratic nation can be mustered only when its people, educated by modern standards, know what is going on and where they are going, and have the conviction that they are receiving as large a share of material success and human dignity as they have a right to receive.' The earlier quotation shows a coarseness of approach that has no justification in propaganda or any other activity. Along such lines lie the dangers of using science for any, instead of human, ends: this is one of the things against which, if fight we must, we should fight.

C. E. LUCAS.

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[2]It seems suitable to recommend here the Pelican Special *Microbes by the Million* (Hugh Nicol). It is one of the best examples of 'popularising' Biology and once again the price should make it widely available.

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KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE, by A. J. Ayer (*Macmillan*, 10/6).

> ' . . . There is, it seems to us,
> At best, only a limited value
> In the knowledge derived from experience.
> The knowledge imposes a pattern, and falsifies,
> For the pattern is new in every moment
> And every moment is a new and shocking
> Valuation of all we have been.'
>
> T. S. Eliot, *East Coker*.

A note on the jacket of this book describes Mr. Ayer as a contributor to the Logical Positivist movement. This is not an unambiguous description, and a few words of classification will make this review more readily comprehensible. At the close of the last war Wittgenstein published in Austria some reflections on the logical work of Frege and Russell under the title which appears in the English translation as *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. This work made a considerable impression in philosophical spheres, and in Vienna consideration of its implications led to the formation of a particular school of philosophers, known as the ' Vienna Circle.' The leading members of this were Schlick, Neurath, Hempel, Carnap and Popper. Their discussions were published in a periodical called *Erkenntnis*. Modification of Wittgenstein's original thesis led to disagreement, notably between Schlick and Carnap, and when in the last decade their doctrines became more widely known, Carnap's teaching was mainly predominant in the United States, where he promulgated it himself from a chair in Chicago University, while Schlick's account took root mainly in England. Most of the members of the Circle describe or described themselves as Logical Positivists or Logical Empiricists ; in Cambridge a school of thought closely allied to Schlick's describe themselves as ' Verificationists.' Wittgenstein, himself now a Cambridge professor, has made his own position clear only in privately-circulated writings and in conversation, but it may be said that he is closer to Schlick's interpretation than to Carnap's.

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There is a considerable difference between the two doctrines, which may be indicated roughly by describing Neurath, Hempel and Carnap as adhering to the Hegelian coherence theory of truth, and Schlick and the Verificationists as adhering to the correspondence theory of truth. In logical terminology, Carnap maintains that truth is a syntactical concept, and that the truth of a proposition is determined by the possibility of its incorporation in a system of propositions. ' Instead of *reality* ' says Neurath, ' we have a number of mutually incompatible but internally coherent bodies of propositions, choice between which is not logically determined. The Verificationists, on the other hand, maintain that the truth of a proposition depends upon its reducibility to a number of basic propositions, and that these basic propositions can only be validated by a direct relationship with some possible occurrence (in most versions, with some experience). Their characteristic slogan runs, ' The meaning of a proposition is the method of its verification.' This may be expressed in the form, ' From premisses with no factual content no conclusion with factual content can be drawn.' Propositions are therefore classed as of three sorts: (a) Those which have no factual content because the symbols used to express them are combined in a way which fails to conform to the rules of logical grammar. These are pseudo-propositions.' All ' metaphysical ' propositions are of this kind. (b) Those which have no factual content because they give information only about the rules for the combination of symbols. These are analytic or *a priori* propostions. (c) Those which have factual content because they express the occurrence or expectaion of certain experiences. These are either ' empirical hypotheses ' or ' basic (incorrigible) propositions '; the former are reducible to a statement about the latter. These are the only genuine propositions.

Mr. Ayer's position, in the present work, corresponds fairly clearly with that I have just outlined as characteristic of the Verificationists. His previous book, *Language, Truth and Logic*, showed a leaning towards the formalism of Carnap, because he then regarded all factual propositions as empirical hypotheses, on the grounds that apparently incorrigible propositions such as 'There is a red patch,' tacitly assumed certain class-concepts. He now recognizes that there is a type of proposition in which the only error that its asserter can make is a verbal one—a misunderstanding about the use of a symbol. This removes the temptation to regard ' truth '

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as a system of mutually dependent hypotheses and relates it firmly to experience. This gives the present work much more claim to be in the line of empiricist thought which is characteristically 'English,' from Bacon, through Locke and Berkeley to Hume and J. S. Mill, and latterly revived by Moore and Russell. This book is an examination of the current theories of perception, drawing mainly upon Price's *Perception* as text-book. Mr. Ayer's thesis is that the alternative theories, *e.g.*, Whitehead's ' Theory of Multiple Location,' Alexander's ' Theory of Compound Things ' and Moore's ' Theory of Appearing,' are not genuine theories at all, in the sense in which the theory that dreams are a prognostication of future waking experiences and the theory that dreams are an expression of unconscious wishes and fears are genuine theories, because whereas in the latter case the evidence may be examined to decide which of the two theories is the more probable, in the case of theories of perception they are invariably validated by an appeal to the same empirical data. They are, therefore, it is concluded, merely alternative languages for describing the same empirical facts. He decides, however, that the argument from illusion (on which most of these theories rely) makes it ' convenient ' to substitute a sense-datum terminology for that of naïve realism.

He proceeds, therefore, to examine in detail the possible definitions of sense-data and the kind of relation that must hold between them and material objects if they are to fulfil the function required of them. This involves a discussion of several epistemological questions of respectable standing, including *esse est percipi,* the difference between sensing and knowing, and the nature of the ' given.' These questions, he maintains, are not questions about fact, but requests for a definition of the term ' sense-datum,' which he supplies. He then goes on to examine the implications of this definition in relation to the so-called ' egocentric predicament,' finding the predicament a verbal one. In rejecting the causal theory of perception (that is, the class of theories of the kind which maintains that ' A is perceptually conscious of x ' is equivalent to ' A is sensing a sense-datum and inferring that it has x for its cause ') he recapitulates what is essentially Russell's analysis of the causal nexus, showing that the logical formulation of the principle of determinism is simply that of Nicod, that ' every event *e* of a kind *E* is a case of an event of some other kind, every instance of

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which is a case of an instance of *E*.' This gives no place to the idea of ' necessity ' as between cause and effect, because this idea has no counterpart in the observable facts.

He concludes his account by asserting that material objects are logical constructions out of sense-data ; that is, roughly that to say anything about a material thing is to say something, but not the same thing, about classes of sense-data, although ' no finite set of singular statements about sense-data can ever formally entail a statement about a material thing,' He specifies the main conditions, which he takes to be four in number, which necessarily and sufficiently hold between sense-data for it to be proper for us to assert a propositon about a material thing. This he does in the field of visual data only.

Now the kind of comment that may have occurred to one not a professional philosopher in reading my outline of Mr. Ayer's contentions is that, throughout, the kind of notions adopted (*e.g.* that of cause) are simply those required by physical science; and secondly, as a rider to this, that nowhere is the idea of value introduced. And, in general, an analysis of the foundations of empirical knowledge which offers no apparent foothold for, for example, any such activity as that of literary appreciation, will be considered seriously wanting.

It does indeed seem to me to be the case that the definition of ' meaning ' from which most of Mr. Ayer's conclusions follow does correspond clearly to the way in which ' meaning ' is understood by a scientist in reference to his laws. In saying ' closely ' I have these considerations in mind. Scientific laws are frequently expressed in a form not in practice verifiable, *e.g.* Newton's law of inertia—' Every body perseveres in its state of rest, or of uniform motion in a right line, unless it is compelled to change that state by forces impressed thereon.' Mr. Ayer would overcome this difficulty by saying that such a law was verifiable in principle, inasmuch as it is only a contingent fact that the conditions specified do not obtain. But the scientist, rather than admit that his law applies only to unrealised contingencies, would probably prefer to restate it in the form ' Every body *tends* to persevere ' etc.—a proposition susceptible of the same mathematical interpretation, yet verifiable in practice, thus fulfilling all his requirements. It is the close similarity between the original statement and the restatement that prompts me to say that Mr. Ayer's definition corresponds closely

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to the actual usage of ' meaning ' in science.

If, then, this definition has a genuine application, it is more convenient to account for its apparent deficiencies than to reject it out of hand. To take the second objection first, then. Mr. Ayer's account of meaning will not permit value-propositions to be at once *a priori* and synthetic, but a value-proposion can be considered from either an analytic or a synthetic point of view. The synthetic treatment is strictly a branch of anthropology; it might examine the kinds of phenomena to which different societies attached the words ' right,' ' wrong,' ' good ' and ' bad ' (my account is simplified) and discover if these could be said to be governed by general laws, and perhaps one general law. Then meaning could perhaps be attached to *e.g.* ' *A* ought to do x ' as a symbol for, *e.g.* ' In the circumstances in which *A* stands, people tend to do x.' The evidence on which this kind of analysis would rest would be, as in science generally, correlation factors between fields of phenomena. The analytic approach to a value-proposition would be that of casuistry in *e.g.*, the Jansenist sense. It would be considered as an element in a deductive system, like a theorem of geometry, and within a given value-system, ' badness ' would consist simply in logical incompatibility with the axioms of the system. It may be remarked that this conception plays a large part in certain kinds of literature; much of the interest in Henry James, for example, consists in the perception, by a series of revealing glimpses, of a subtle and complicated system of mutually dependent ethical values. In the absence of precise symbolic formulation (as in mathematics), the most valuable literary criticism, for example, would be that betraying the ' subtlest sense of relative values '—as is generally held to be the case; but judgments of value could not then have the same kind of finality that they are sometimes supposed to have.

The other objection to Mr. Ayer's thesis, that of its close association with scientific concepts, is one frequently brought against empiricists with justification. Hume, for example, leaned heavily on contemporary psychological views in expounding his doctrine; and one Logical Positivist, Hempel, goes so far as to say that ' The system of basic propositions we call true . . . may only be characterized by the historical fact, that it is the system which is actually adopted by mankind, and especially by the scientists of our culture-circle.[1] Mr. Ayer shares no such naïve faith in contemporary

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science; but the formulation of his epistemology does seem to me to be influenced by contemporary scientific method, and this influence gives it a bias to which objection may legitimately be raised, and which greater generality would have avoided. The kind of bias I mean is that indicated by the implicit assumption that one of the most important reasons for examining the foundations of empirical knowledge is in order to provide an analysis of material things in terms of sense-data. Though Mr. Ayer never explicitly says that all our knowledge is knowledge of material things, he never, significantly, says it isn't, and the employment of the term ' sense-data ' itself suggests that the only kind of experiences on which knowledge is founded are those of vision, touch, hearing, taste and smell. It is easier, of course, to speak of ' knowledge ' in terms of these senses because their data has been quantified, to a high degree of precision in some cases, during the last three centuries ; but this is a purely contingent fact of the kind which a philosopher should ignore, and more generality is needed.

The clue for greater generality is provided by Mr. Ayer himself, when he rejects the Behaviourist analysis of the experience of others on the ground, suggested by Ryle,[2] that it is a contingent fact that any given experience belongs to any particular person: ' for although it is a necessary fact that the series of experiences that constitutes my history does not in any way overlap with the series of experiences that constitutes the history of any other person, inasmuch as we do not at present choose to attach any meaning to statements that would imply the intervention of such series, nevertheless, with regard to any given experience, it is a contingent fact that it belongs to one series rather than another ' (p. 168). The importance of this way of speaking is that whereas the greater part of science up to now, including psychology, has tended to regard all phenomena as occurring in relation to a more or less standard observer, here is put forward the conception of the world as consisting of occurrences which are functions of several variables, some of which are associated with the so-called ' observer '; thus, ' If *p*, *q*, *r*, then *s* ' where *p*, *q*, and *r* are all facts,[3] some about the

[1] *Analysis*, II, 4. [2] *Analysis*, IV, 1.

[3] These ' facts ' will probably have to be defined in terms of experience.

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' external world,' others about an ' observer,' and *s* is a resultant event. Science usually evades the specification of the full set of conditions for an occurrence by correlating phenomena only in respect of the aspects which are relatively independent of the state of the observer. It is only very recently that physicists, for example, have been compelled to recognize that no observation is completely independent of an observer.

Thus, preference has been given by science to certain types of experience when choosing the terms in which to formulate their laws. These are those that are relatively independent of the observer, and, associated with this, are the most reliable bases for certain kinds of inference, as they most often fulfil certain expectations. Formal visual data, *e.g.*, vary less with the state of the observer than formal aural data, and are therefore generally preferred. But there is a considerable number of other types of experience of which organisms are capable (*e.g.*, having a memory, being in love) of which science makes little use. At the moment, admittedly, it would be impracticable to state the result of most scientific experiments in terms of the degree of happiness or unhappiness of the observer (rather than in terms, *e.g.*, of visual coincidence), but this is due only to the lack of quantification of these experiences, which is a contingent fact. Mr. Ayer himself remarks on the ' reservation of the use of the word " real " for what can be quantitatively measured.'

This generalisation of the basis of empirical knowledge removes the charge of apparent indifference to such a large section of experience that may be levelled against science, and against a philosophical account of scientific method. There is nothing in Mr. Ayer's account to stand in the way of this kind of generalisation, and when it is made, its acceptability to those whose experience lies more in artistic than in scientific fields is increased. I do not wish to maintain that the details of Mr. Ayer's thesis are philosophically impeccable ; but I do wish to suggest that out-of-hand rejection of it on grounds of its fundamental inadequacy is not to be recommended.

R. O. C. WINKLER.

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